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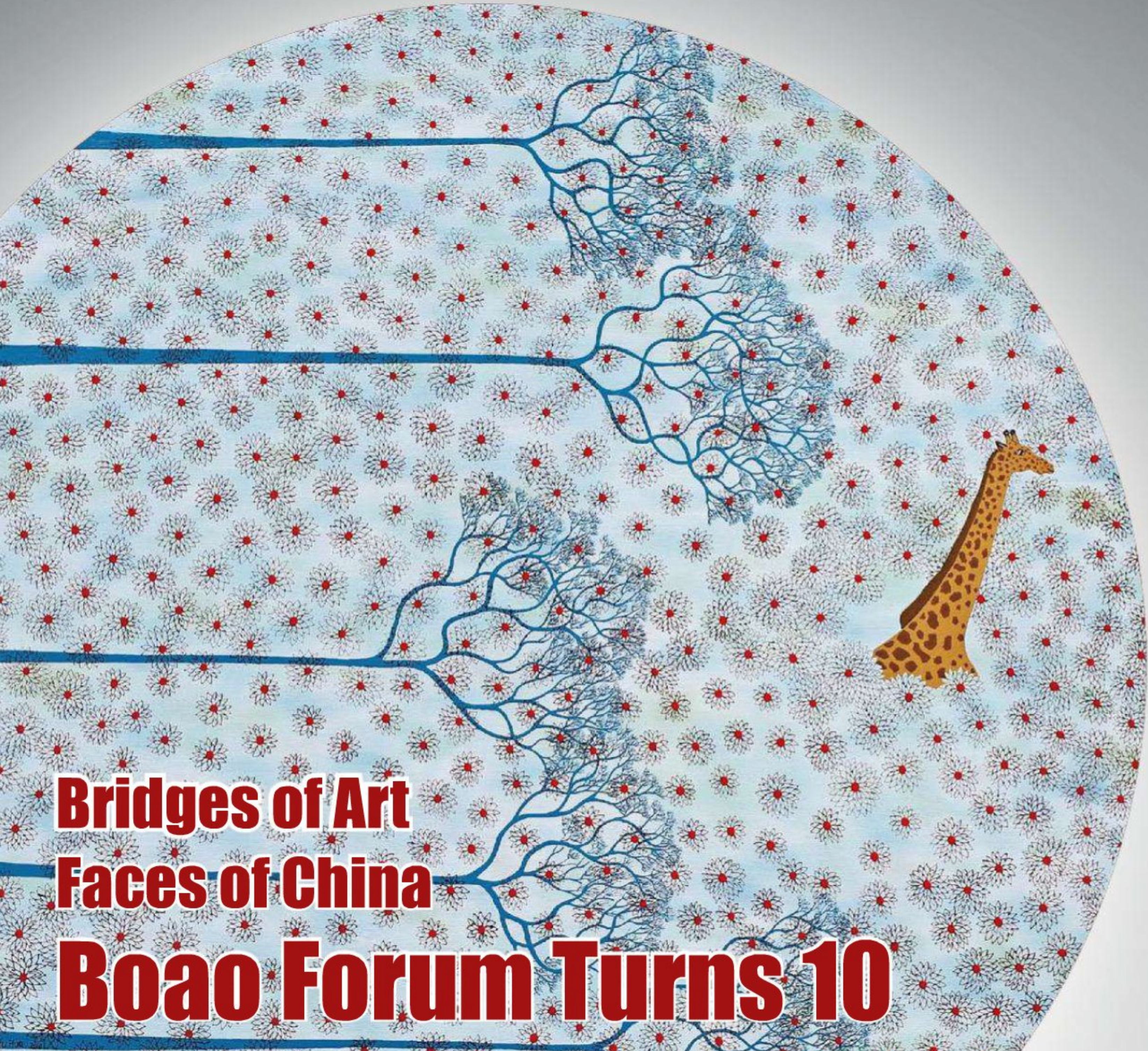

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Faces of China

Boao Forum Turns 10

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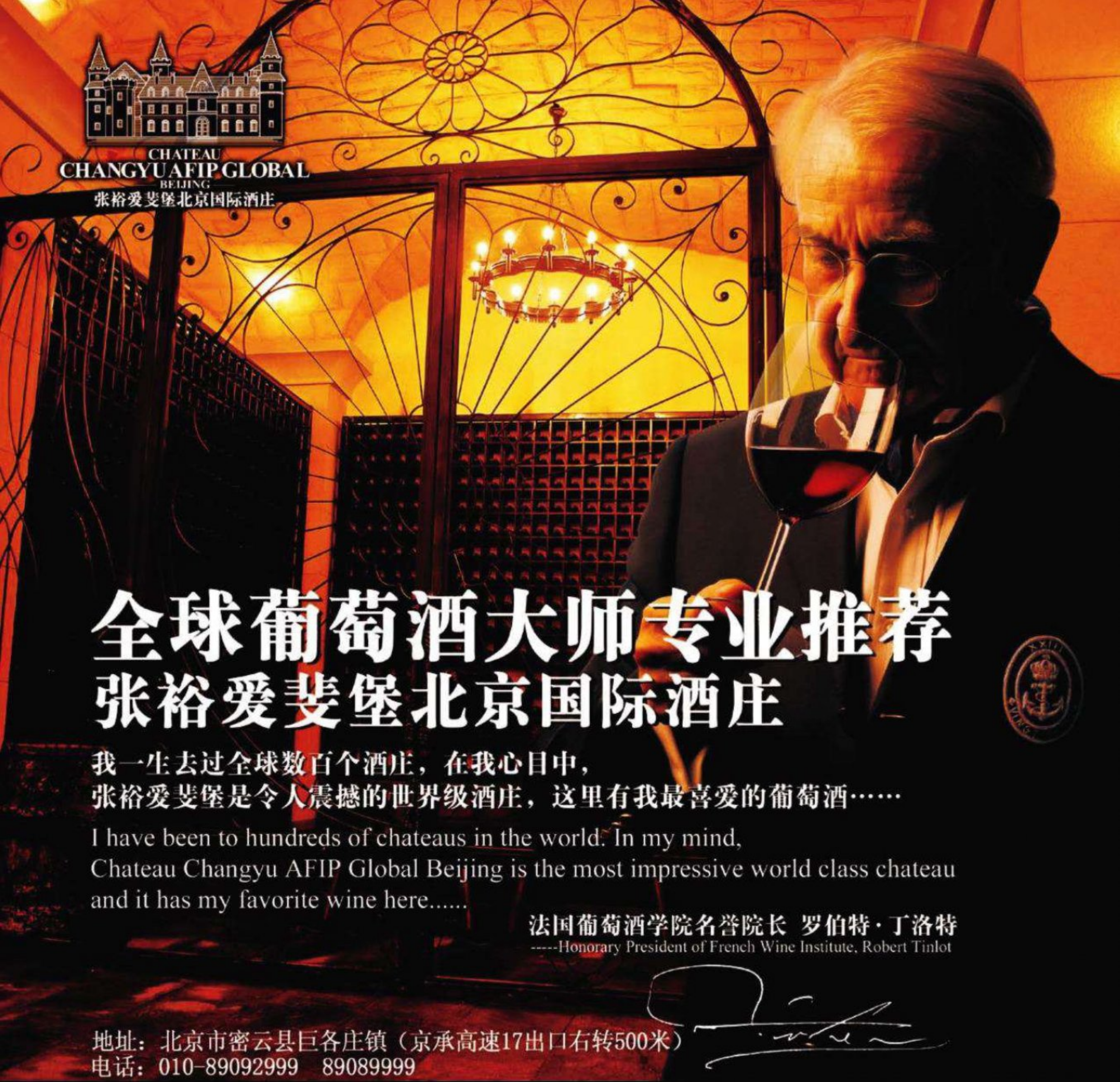

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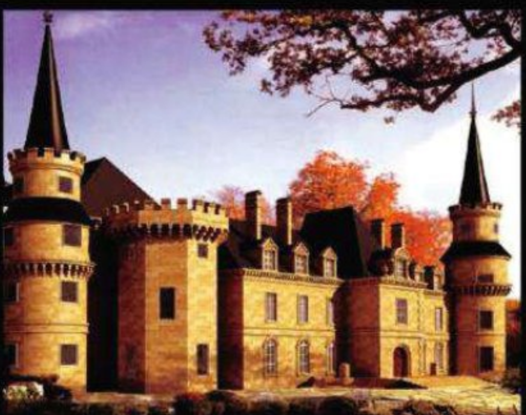

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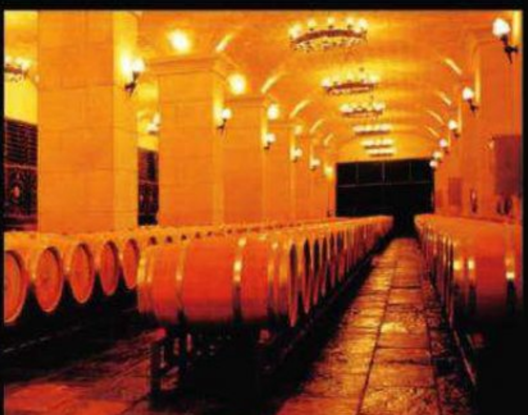

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Snapshot 4

Features

Sailing On 8
50-Year-Old COSCO Spans the Globe
The Difference of a Decade 12
Boao Transforms into a Travel Mecca
A Global Eye 18
Interview with BFA Secretary-General Zhou Wenzhong
A Look Back at BFA Themes 20

Now

Face to Face with the Panchen Lama 22
Devastating Quake Hits Japan 24

People

Who Is China? 30
Interview with Adrian Zhu, Chief Designer of China's National Publicity Film

Nature

Weather or Not? 34
Concerns from a British Photographer

Culture

A Puppet Life 38
An Explosive Triangle 42
The Future of China's Leading Producers of Fireworks

Society

Chinese Mothers vs. Tiger Mothers 46
Fifteen Minutes 49
Struggles of Overnight Grass-roots Sensations
Grabbing a Godfather 52

Business

Away to Anhui 56
Economic Emergence of the Central Chinese Province
Commercial Heritage 60
Putting a Price Tag on History

Explore

Ship on a Hill 64
A Roving Residence 68

Exhibit

A Place with Characters 72
National Museum of Chinese Writing
Bridges of Modern Chinese Art 76
Info 80

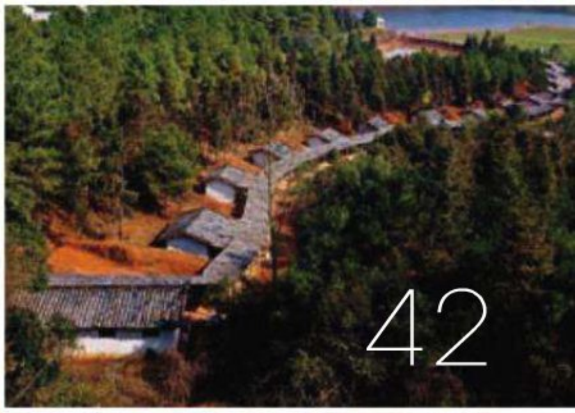
Front Cover:
Dynamic Life, oil on canvas by Yu Hua.

NTENTS

12

34

38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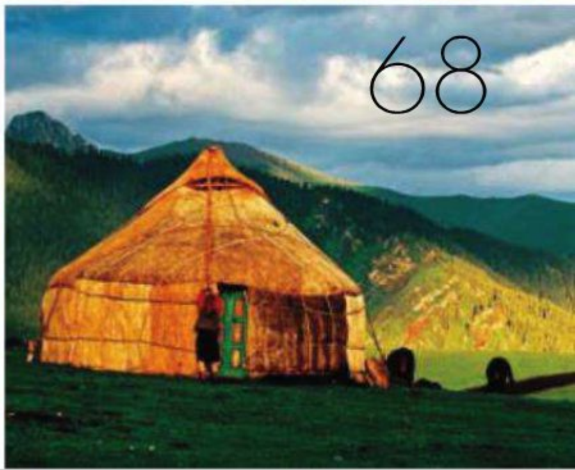
64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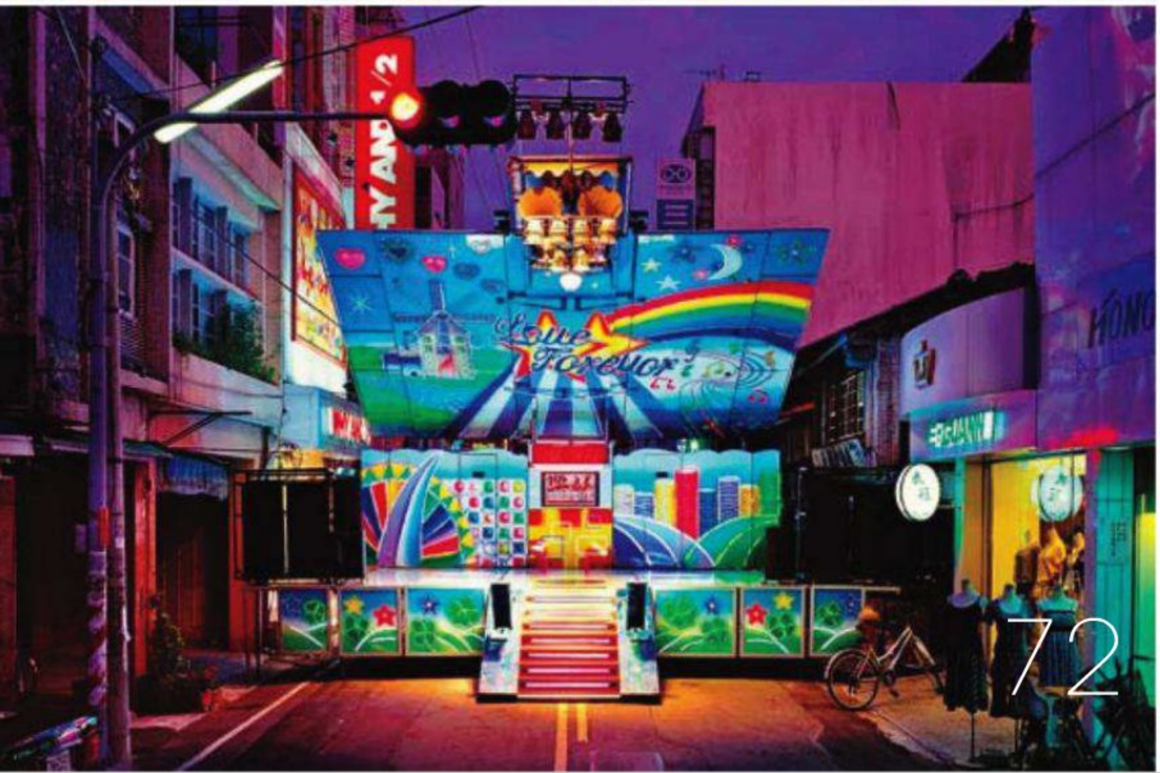

Love Forever
72

Beijing
Pinggu

CHINAPICTORIAL

Travel Destination of the Month

Pinggu Peach Blossoms

In China, April is the time for peach blossoms. In Beijing, Pinggu District is the best place to see them, with its 14,667 hectares of peach trees and the renowned Pinggu International Peach Blossom Festival.

Because of a variety of landforms, the 14,667 hectares of flowers are divided into six scenic areas, which each feature a completely different landscape. While some are most pleased by vast expanses of flowers, others may be delighted by only a few peach trees on a mountain or next to a lake. The best places for peach blossom viewing are Xiaojin Hill and Jinhai Lake. While tourists can climb up the hill and look over the sea of flowers below, the lake offers a more romantic boat trip through the blossoms. Of course, more free-spirited tourists can drive or ride bikes across the whole scenic zone, which is dotted with peach blossoms.

Plenty of farmer-operated family hotels can be found in Pinggu, which also serve food with strong local flavor, such as roast lamb, sliced radish with rice, and country pancakes. Pinggu is only 70 kilometers from downtown Beijing, and driving there is easy and convenient. The 13th Pinggu International Peach Blossom Festival will run from April 20 to May 3 — the optimum period to visit. Spend a weekend with the flowers and you won't be disappointed.

A farmer's house against the background of peach blossoms, Pinggu. CFP

Children play amongst peach trees. IC

Instant Starbucks

Starbucks is launching its instant coffee packets in China, expanding its business beyond chain stores and entering the Chinese consumer packaged-goods market.

The Seattle-based coffee company's single-serving coffee packets will be available at more than 800 Starbucks locations across Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan beginning April 6.

Disneyland Membership Hike

Hong Kong Disneyland launched a new Magic Access membership on March 10, with prices ranging from 650 to 2,400 HK dollars for adults, up 30 to 40 percent from the current membership rates.

Magic Access offers members benefits such as discounts on food, merchandise, and hotel bookings, first access to new attractions, and various birthday treats.

Beijing Culture in Berlin

The Beijing Tourism Administration held a gala in Berlin recently to promote cultural exchange and cooperation between Chinese and German tourism professionals.

The event aimed to familiarize Germans with Chinese luxury shopping, hotels and food geared towards European travelers. Last year, Beijing saw a 19.6 percent increase of overnight stays by Germans.

A Major Role in Aussie Tourism

China has surpassed the United Kingdom as Australia's most valuable tourism market, revealed a survey released by the Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism on March 9.

About 5,441,000 people visited Australia in 2010 and spent AU$18 billion (US$17.6) on their trips. Chinese travelers, who represented the fourth largest incoming nationality, poured AU$3.1 billion into the economy.

Daily LA-Shanghai Flights

On March 9, United Airlines announced that it will offer daily direct flights between Los Angeles and Shanghai starting May 20.

Boeing 777 aircraft will serve the new route. More than 2 million Chinese tourists are expected to visit the United States in the next four years, and 3 million Americans will visit China, according to forecasts from the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration.

Perfume Bottles

The Third Panjiayuan Perfume Bottle Exhibition was held from March 5 to 21 at Beijing's Panjiayuan Market, attracting considerable crowds. Since ancient times, perfume has always been enjoyed by women, and gorgeous containers can double its allure.

Contrasting the previous two exhibitions, this time more emphasis was placed on the bottles' historic background, design style, and special connotations.

Marilyn highlights various perfume bottles on display. ***IC***

N°5
CHANEL
PARIS

NPC deputies entering the Great Hall. by Dong Fang

CPPCC & NPC

Beginning March 3, 2011, the Fourth Session of the 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was held at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, followed by the fourth session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5, also in the Great Hall.

More than 3,000 registered journalists from home and abroad covered the two sessions.

Badminton Triumph

The top-ranked women's singles player Wang Shixian from China defeated Japan's Eriko Hirose in straight sets to clinch her first title at All England Open Badminton Championships in Birmingham on March 13.

The 21-year-old Wang edged Hirose 24-22 in the first game before taking the second 21-18.

China's Wang Shixian poses for photographers following her victory in the women's singles final. IC

Cosmetics Fair

The 34th Guangzhou International Cosmetics Fair kicked off on March 9, in the Guangdong provincial capital. The 10 professional exhibition areas attracted 2,000 exhibitors from 18 countries and regions, including France, Switzerland, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

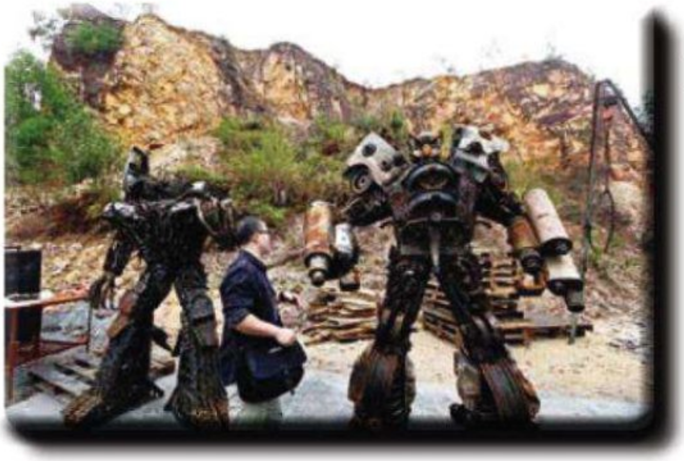
Running since 1989, the fair is the largest of its kind in Asia.

A beautician uses a model to demonstrate make-up to visitors. Yuan Hongwei/Xinhua

Scrap Iron Transformer

Leading a 17-member team through efforts consuming four months, Yang Junlin, owner of a hardware factory, produced "Megatron" in Huizhou City of Guangdong Province.

The 4.5-meter-long, 3.2-meter-wide, and 2.5-meter-high Transformer is visually impressive. Yang is quite proud of his creation, which transformed five tons of scrap iron.



Transformers made of scrap iron. CFP

Free NAMOC

A cornerstone national art museum, the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) has been offering free admission since March 2. During the first two days of the promotion, more than 12,000 people visited.

Patrons can request free tickets online or in person. Tickets can be reserved up to one week in advance through NAMOC's official website and free tickets at the door require valid ID. The website and the on-site ticket office provide 2,000 tickets and 4,000 tickets daily, respectively.

Visitors at NAMOC enjoy an exhibition on March 5. IC

A night scene of the Beijing COSCO Building.

Founded in 1961, China Ocean Shipping (Group) Company (COSCO) has spent the last half a century becoming China's largest and one of the world's leading enterprises specializing in shipping, modern logistics and shipbuilding and repair.

WANHE
COSCO

Wan He Vessel.

SAILING ON

Ocean Shipping

COSCO's fleet includes over 800 modern merchant vessels with a total tonnage of 57 million DWTs and an annual carrying capacity of 400 million tons. Its shipping lines cover over 1,600 ports in more than 160 countries and regions worldwide, and its fleet is the biggest in China and second in the world. COSCO is ranked first in China and fifth in the world in total container space, and is also the world's top dry bulk fleet. COSCO is a world leader in comprehensive strength of bulk carriers, multiple-purpose vessels and its special vessel fleet. Its oil tanker fleet features cutting-edge super tankers. The enterprise owns and operates 32 terminals worldwide, providing 156 berths. It ranks fifth in the world in container terminal throughput.

COSCO's container vessel fleet features 150 vessels with the total carrying capacity of 614,092 TEUs, ranking fifth in the world in total carrying capacity. Docking at more than 149 ports in over 50 countries and regions, the vessel fleet of COSCO Container Lines serves 74 international shipping lines, 12 international branch lines, 20 domestic coastal shipping lines and 62 branch lines in Yangtze River and Pearl River delta regions. COSCO Container Lines provides over 400 domestic and overseas sales and services outlets both at home and abroad to provide high-quality and face-to-face customer service, forming a far-reaching global sales and service network.

COSCO's bulk fleet includes more than 450 large bulk cargo vessels of a variety of types such as Handysize, Panamax and Capesize, which combine for a total carrying capacity of 38.55 million DWTs. The group has taken the world's lead in dry and bulk shipping. It mainly provides transport services for such goods as grain, ore, sand, coal, fertilizer, steel, wood and farm products, and its shipping lines cover 1,000 ports in over 100 countries and regions.

The group's oil tanker fleet is comprised of 37 vessels, including oil tankers, liquefied gas tankers and chemical tankers, which combine for a capacity of 5.5 million DWTs. The fleet's size positions it as a leader among enterprises in the same class. They also operate 13 VLCCs, which serve as "flagship vessels" in building the company's brand image. The fleet has managed to expand its operations to 300 ports in over 100 countries and regions.

A bird's-eye view of COSCO (Dalian) Shipyard Co., Ltd.

Modern Logistics

COSCO Group utilizes rich logistics facilities and resources. It owns and operates more than 4,000 transportation vehicles, 2.49 million square meters of storage space and 2.97 million square meters of warehouses. It provides high value-added services for customers in household, chemicals, power and financing sectors, already setting several world records in related industries.

Committed to the development of modern logistics, COSCO Logistics mainly provides high value-added services for customers in six fields: autos, household appliances, chemicals, electricity, exhibition, and financing, through its international network positioning and segmented markets. COSCO Logistics has topped China's 100 largest logistics enterprises for five years straight and is consistently honored with various Chinese shipping logistics awards, in addition to being named the 2006 Lloyd's Freight Transport Buyer Asia's Best Third Party Logistics Company in China.

COSCO's modern logistics.

Ship Building

COSCO Group operates a total of 16 docks including 300,000-ton-class docks and 500,000-ton-class docks, which enable large ship and ocean engineering construction, refitting and repairs. These bases provide leading production equipment assembling ability and production management level, and rank among world leaders in factors such as technical ability, production efficiency and production cost, making COSCO the largest ship-repairing enterprise and most-advanced ship-building enterprise in China.

COSCO Shipyard Co., Ltd. (COSCO Shipyard) affiliated with COSCO Group has six large ship production bases in Dalian, Zhoushan, Nantong, Guangdong, Shanghai and Lianyungang and eight ancillary service enterprises under its affiliation. After eight years of exponential development, COSCO Shipyard has become a preferred partner for top shipping companies and offshore oil service providers.

COSCO Shipyard has the total docking capacity of 1.85 million tons and the annual shipbuilding capacity of 2.4 million tons, including series 5000 barking space PCTC, 30,000 tons of series heavy lift multi-purpose ships, 57,000 tons of series bulk carriers, 80,000 tons of bulk carriers, and 92,500 tons of bulk carriers. Its marine projects include the world's first drilling production storage oil vessel (FDPSO), cylindrical rigs, self-drilling platform, and semi-submersible offshore oil platforms.

Global Vision

After 50 years of growth, COSCO has established a global framework with Beijing as its center, and a radius extending to nine regional branches in Hong Kong, the Americas, Europe, Singapore, Japan, Australia, South Korea, West Asia and Africa. A complete global business chain comprising shipping, logistics, terminal, and shipbuilding and repair enterprises is taking shape. Included under the group's umbrella are more than 1,000 companies and branches in over 50 countries and regions, which employ over 130,000 people. COSCO's total assets exceed 300 billion yuan, and overseas assets and income now exceed half of that total.

COSCO is one of the earliest Chinese enterprises to enter international capital markets. Early in 1993, COSCO Investment was listed in Singapore in the form of a back-door listing. Currently, it holds controlling shares or significant pieces of listed companies such as China COSCO, COSCO Pacific, COSCO International, COSCO Investment and COSCO Shipping.

Since it joined Global Compact in 2004, COSCO has insisted on sustainable development in pursuit of "harmonious development and benefits for human beings." It has innovatively combined Global Compact and sustainable development plans with future development of the enterprise, and explored the sustainable development models suitable for characteristics of developing countries.

COSCO provides logistics services for a chemical project of Reliance Industries, an India-based Fortune Global 500 company.

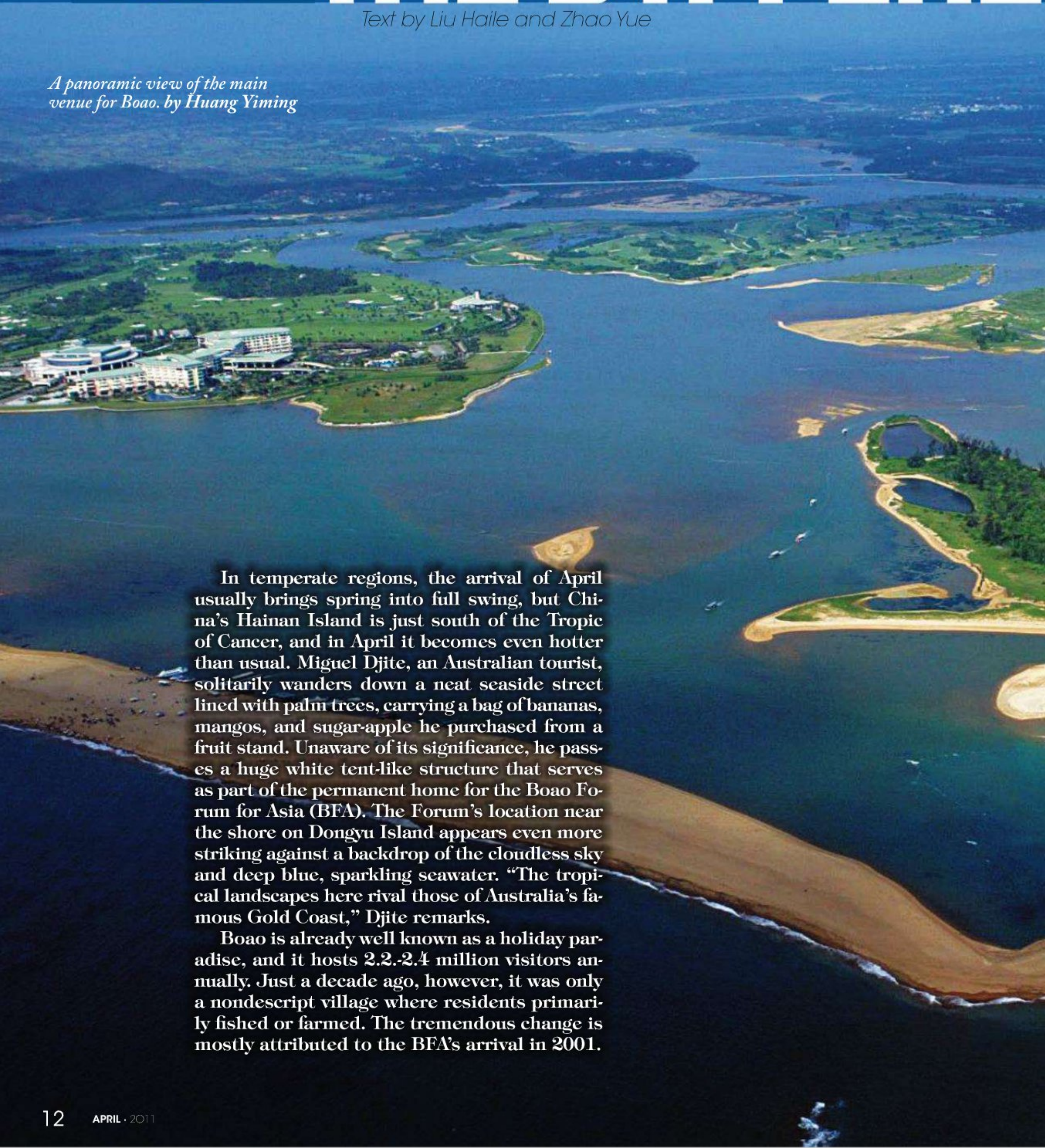
COSCO Group's Sustainable Development Report has been included in the UN Global Compact Notable COP List for five years in succession. In February 2011, COSCO became a member of Global Compact LEAD Program.

The 50-year-old giant enterprise combines the performance of corporate social responsibility and corporate development strategy, while actively cultivating "green competitiveness." The group has been a Global 500 enterprise for many years. Its numbers for internationalization operation are nearing the UN's standards for Global 100 transnational companies. Moreover, it is gradually enhancing its position as a system integrator for international shipping, logistics and ports, and shipbuilding and repair sectors while marching towards its goal of becoming a leader in the global shipping industry with the principle of "globalized development, harmony and mutual benefits" and the broader vision of "building a century-old COSCO."

Da Fu, a heavy lift carrier.

THE DIFFERE

Text by Liu Haile and Zhao Yue



A panoramic view of the main venue for Boao. by Huang Yiming

In temperate regions, the arrival of April usually brings spring into full swing, but China's Hainan Island is just south of the Tropic of Cancer, and in April it becomes even hotter than usual. Miguel Djite, an Australian tourist, solitarily wanders down a neat seaside street lined with palm trees, carrying a bag of bananas, mangos, and sugar-apple he purchased from a fruit stand. Unaware of its significance, he passes a huge white tent-like structure that serves as part of the permanent home for the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA). The Forum's location near the shore on Dongyu Island appears even more striking against a backdrop of the cloudless sky and deep blue, sparkling seawater. "The tropical landscapes here rival those of Australia's famous Gold Coast," Djite remarks.

Boao is already well known as a holiday paradise, and it hosts 2.2.-2.4 million visitors annually. Just a decade ago, however, it was only a nondescript village where residents primarily fished or farmed. The tremendous change is mostly attributed to the BFA's arrival in 2001.

NCE OF A DECADE

2008: Chinese President Hu Jintao attends the BFA's annual meeting alongside distinguished guests from other member states.

Genesis

As one enters Boao, the fantastic tropical coast gingerly stretches out before the eyes. Sea breezes gently rock palm trees over the white sands of Yudai (Jade Belt) Beach, as the Wanquan River humbly empties into the sea. Three islands resemble gems inlaid on the surface of the placid sea, namely Yuanyang, Dongyu, and Shapo. Due to is stunning scenery, the World Tourism Organization called Boao one of the "best-preserved and most beautiful estuary resorts in the world."

However, before 2001 when BFA was officially established, Boao was known only to surrounding locals and a handful of outsiders. It didn't even show up on the map of Hainan Province. In those days, residents couldn't have imagined that their hometown would so quickly gain global importance.

Boao Forum For Asia Annual Conference 2010
博鳌亚洲论坛2010年年会

BFA provides a platform for heavyweights from across Asia to meet and conduct dialogues. Xinhua

BFA's annual conferences have always attracted a media spotlight. Xinhua

In the summer of 1997, Jiang Xiaosong, a Chinese businessman, invited Morihiro Hosokawa, former prime minister of Japan, Bob Hawke, former prime minister of Australia, and their wives to join him on a vacation in Boao. As Jiang chatted with the two foreign politicians one night in the tropical paradise, they were inspired with the idea of organizing a pan-Asian international organization, which would eventually become the Boao Forum for Asia.

A declaration ratified by delegates from 26 founding member countries on February 27, 2001, marked the official inauguration of the BFA. In April 2002, the BFA held its first annual conference in Boao, and the small town first opened its arms to welcome scores of distinguished guests such as Zhu Rongji, then premier of China, Junichiro Koizumi, them prime minister of Japan, Lee Han-dong, then prime minister of South Korea, and Thaksin Shinawatra, then prime minister of Thailand, along with about 2,000 government delegates, entrepreneurs, and scholars. In an instant, Boao became the center of the universe as far as Asia was concerned. That same year, it was decided that Boao would remain the permanent site for the BFA. From that moment on, Boao was known throughout Asia. The small town would never be the same, and a decade of drastic transformation commenced.

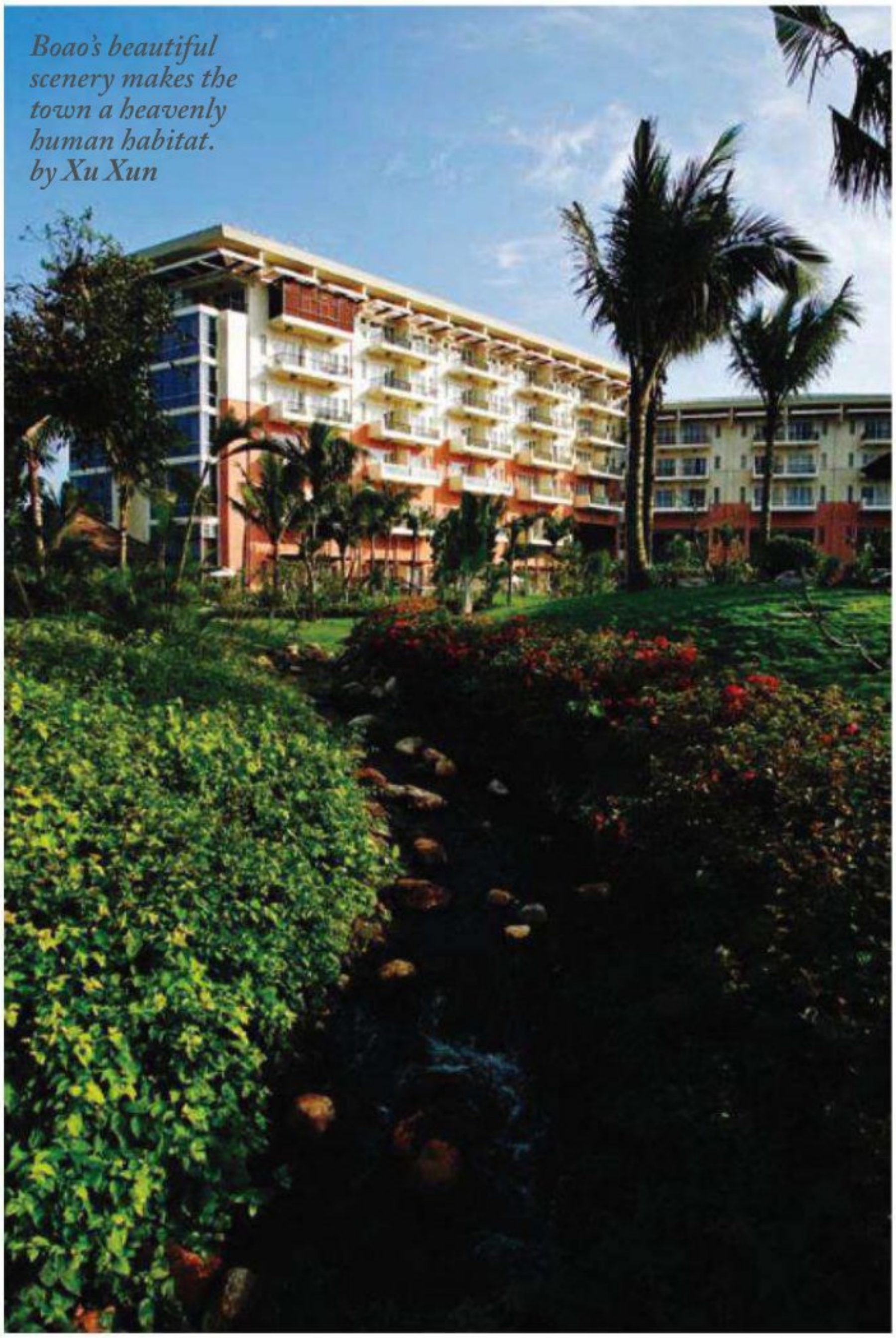
Other organizations followed BFA's lead, and now it's considered trendy to hold meetings in Boao. Since 2001, the town has hosted more than 3,000 domestic and international exhibitions and conferences. In 2007 alone, 380 meetings chose Boao. The tally fluctuated from 350 in 2008 to 400 in 2009. The town was injected with massive demand from the prosperous MICE (meeting, incentive, conference, and exhibition) industry, which turned the formerly underdeveloped agriculture community into a bustling city of international importance.

Boosting Infrastructure

Mo Taixing, deputy mayor of Boao, has witnessed the town's tremendous changes over the past decade. "I've lived here for 18 years since I moved to Boao in 1993," he explains. "At that time, there was only one street lined with several dozen houses, which was often dirty and disorganized. Since the BFA settled here, local government and residents have constantly improved the urban infrastructure, culminating in the modern Boao you see today."

In 2010, former Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo was elected chairman of BFA's Board of Directors. Xinhua

During the World Expo Shanghai, BFA set up a promotional exhibition hall at the expo site. Xinhua



Boao's beautiful scenery makes the town a heavenly human habitat. by Xu Xun

Before last decade, Boao lacked public transportation, and now buses and taxis diligently run day and night. Previously, one had to scour the town to find an available telephone. Today, Boao is among the most wired Chinese villages, linked to the rest of the world through telecommunication in every corner of town. Nowadays, Boao is a town characterized by modern conference and exhibition facilities, star-rated hotels, and abundant golf courses.

As the seat of the BFA, Boao is now a world-renowned exhibition and meeting center and a hot destination for recreational travel. "The MICE industry has greatly bolstered the economic growth of Boao," notes Liu Wei, manager of the Conference Affairs Department of the BFA International Convention Center. "Since the BFA was established here in 2001, the town has hosted more than 3,000 meetings at different levels, which have provided a stable flow of visitors and income." A survey conducted by Sofitel Boao, a local five-star hotel, shows that an average of 1,500 yuan is spent on accommodations for each conference attendee, not to mention expenditures related to dining, shopping, and local transportation.

Not long ago, Hainan itself set the goal of becoming an international tourist island. Boao's new target is to become the island's most beautiful town. It now has a special logo: an abstract blue pattern resembling a mythical turtle holding its head high. The logo can be found all over the town, in telephone booths, advertising, and even roadside fruit stands. Almost all signboards in town include both Chinese and English, evidencing the town's ambitious aspirations for internationalization. Although locals still retain much of their traditional lifestyles, such as sipping afternoon tea in teahouses, their relationship with the outside world is undeniably becoming greater and greater.

Changing Lives

Compared to infrastructural improvements, changes in lifestyles are even more striking. Most locals no longer make a living in agriculture or fishing like every previous generation, but have now embraced tourism-related businesses such as restaurants, hotels, cafes, and souvenir shops.

Along with the benefits of tourism, Boao now features many hotels to serve the increasing flow of tourists. In addition to the star-rated establishments, dozens of family hotels offer lodgings for a wider variety of visitors. Among them is Qiongbo Hotel, operated by Mr. He and his wife, Lin Chunmei. Although small in size, their hotel features air conditioning, televisions, and 24-hour hot water. Compared to a decade ago, the family earns a handsome income from the inn. Lin is usually grinning with satisfaction, her gold necklace and earrings glistening in the sun.

Every year, their hotel sees peak season when the BFA comes to town. During the busiest days, their daughters, who are married and living elsewhere, return home to lend a hand. According to them, the busy season can stretch from November to April, and even in the off-season summer months, the hotel can often maintain an occupancy rate above 50 percent.

The last two years have made business even better as major construction projects in Boao provide them construction worker clients. "Real estate projects such as Linglong Bay, Golden Harbor, and Qianzhou Bay have consistently brought a good flow of migrant workers," Lin reveals. "Last year, our hotel was almost full even in the off-season. On most nights, we only had one or two rooms empty."

Wang Ming, 35, is a native of Boao. He left his hometown more than 10 years ago to find a better life elsewhere. After witnessing the tremendous changes his hometown underwent in recent years, he decided to return for good and open a cafe called "Old House." His cafe features an avant-garde design comparable to counterparts in metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai. "The most notable change of Boao is its people," Wang notes. "Now, locals are becoming more and more confident as they increasingly open up to the outside world."

From April 14 to 16, 2011, the BFA Annual Conference will return to Boao with the theme "Inclusive Development." At the meeting, delegates will exchange ideas related to 20 key topics concerning global economic outlook, capital flow, and new energy vehicles, searching for methods to create sustainable development against a background of an uncertain global economic future. Regardless of the outcome of the talks, the enormous changes that the BFA has brought to the town are undeniable.

Over the past decade, Boao has seen a steady development in both tourism and real estate industries. ***Xinhua***

A clean and scenic street in Boao. by ***Xu Xun***

博鳌亚洲论坛
Boao Forum for Asia
用户至上 用心服务
Customer First Service Foremost

A Global Eye

— Interview with BFA Secretary-General Zhou Wenzhong

Text by Wang Lei

As its 10th anniversary approached, Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) welcomed its newly elected secretary-general with an eye on the future. On July 8, 2010, soon after finishing his term as Chinese Ambassador to the United States, Zhou Wenzhong replaced Long Yongtu as chair of the prestigious non-governmental international organization. Joining China's drive for greater public diplomacy efforts, the veteran diplomat isn't finished adding accomplishments to his 40-year diplomatic career.

On the eve of the 2011 BFA Annual Forum, Mr. Zhou sat down for an interview with *China Pictorial.*

China Pictorial: After 10 years of development, BFA has emerged as an international forum with tremendous influence. What do you think of its work over the past decade?

Zhou Wenzhong: The primary factor influencing BFA's past achievements is demand. The forum was founded against the backdrop of the Asian financial crisis, when Asian nations hungered for a platform to discuss and develop policies related to trade issues, aiming to collectively face the economic downturn head-on while minimizing losses related to respective interests.

Over the last decade, BFA has grown with substantial support from the Chinese government. In 2008, President Hu Jintao attended the BFA Annual Conference.

Of course, support from the 28 member states is also crucial to the smooth and successful operation of the forum. Each year, member states send officials at and above ministerial level to the annual conference, and some state leaders have even addressed opening ceremonies.

Over its 10 years of development, BFA's influence has been growing steadily. During the 2010 Conference, new members from countries beyond the 28 member states were added to the Board of Directors, including Former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, Former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson. The participation of former politicians undoubtedly enhances the reach and inclusiveness of the forum. And with China as its host state, the BFA receives support from both the central government and provincial authorities of Hainan.

In its early years, the BFA's efforts were primarily focused on introducing Asia to the rest of the world, enhancing relationships between Asia and other continents, and helping Asia strengthen its global position. As Asia's might has been growing and its influence in the international community increasing, recent forums have seen a shift to efforts exploring the role Asia plays in the world, inspiring new topics such as "green development" and "low-carbon development." In general, the BFA has made remarkable achievements in three aspects: helping the world understand Asia, enhancing the position of Asian countries in the international community, and coping with issues of common concern. With its esteem rising, the forum is consistently attracting more participation.

CP: The 2011 BFA annual conference is scheduled for April. Any new direction compared to previous annual meetings? How do you see it unfolding?

Zhou: This year's theme is "inclusive development," which is a question of common concern.

The topic was chosen for discussion early in planning as we looked ahead to the future while celebrating BFA's 10th anniversary. The world is entering a post-financial-crisis age, and all nations, not just those in Asia, are scrambling for optimum development models and growth patterns. We all need readjustment, but questions remain as to the best method to do so in which direction. An unavoidable quandary is the relationship between economic growth and social progress. With this in mind, the goal of "inclusive development" connotes achieving just, fair, and balanced social progress through sustainable economic development.

The Chinese government attaches importance to "inclusive growth" as evidenced by President Hu Jintao's use of the term on two important occasions last year. "Inclusive growth" was coined by Asia Development Bank, and the concept was included as a Millennium Development Goal by the United Nations. In China, every level of government is concentrating on improving the economic growth model, or in other words, giving priority to livelihood and helping individuals' incomes to mature with economic development. So, this year, BFA will focus on this hot topic.

President Hu is expected to address the opening ceremony, and his speech will further illustrate China's viewpoint based on the goals for development in the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015) discussed during ongoing NPC and CPPCC annual sessions.

CP: When BFA was founded, its organizers drew on experience from the Davos World Economic Forum. Ten years later, BFA has developed its own traits. Many are comparing the two forums. How do you see their relationship?

Zhou: Davos Forum has a longer history and unquestionable authority, and the bulk of its participants are developed countries and their major enterprises. As its name suggests, the forum focuses on the global economy, including developing countries, but first gives consideration to the interests of developed countries and their sustainable development.

There are other similar forums, but I think we must be aware that BFA is a forum for Asia and our mission is to accomplish the goals we set. Although some of our members are developed or moderately developed countries, we always represent the largest majority of developing countries, and our target is to enhance their development. Therefore, we must examine relationships between the advanced industrialized countries and the developing nations. We hope that developed countries can play a better role in assisting developing countries in solving developmental hitches. Fundamentally, developed countries will never see the next level without progress from developing countries, and only when mutually beneficial win-win partnerships are established can both move into the fast lane of common development.

CP: You used to serve as Chinese Ambassador to the United States. As a veteran diplomat, how do you see the new position as BFA's secretary-general? What have you been doing since you assumed the post in July?

Zhou: First of all, I appreciate Long Yongtu for his recommendation. Mr. Long was my classmate when I studied in U.K., and he knows me well. I'm also grateful to my close friend, Former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who also played an active role in recommending me for the position. Of course, I also owe much to members of the Board of Directors for their trust and support. It is my honor to be named to this position, which, to me, means not just responsibility but also a role transition. It requires me to shift my eyes from bilateral to multilateral relations and from focus on political security to goals related to economy and trade. I must adapt to the new job. I majored in foreign trade, but focused more on political security after beginning my diplomatic career. Now as secretary-general, I have a chance to once again focus on economics and trade, which excites me, because I am still passionate about economics.

After assuming the post, I have been concentrating on preparations for this year's annual meeting in addition to some measures of structural adjustment. We are also contemplating how to better serve our members and organize some interesting activities for them. For example, we may invite administrators from related ministries and committees to meet our members and invite our Board of Directors to meet with members during their visit to Beijing. We're also planning forums in other places like Hong Kong and Australia. This July, we're planning a meeting in Australia to reinforce resource trade cooperation. Australia is a resource-based country and a major exporter of resource products. China has imported a great amount of coal, iron ore, and liquefied natural gas from Australia. The July meeting is expected to enhance Sino-Australian trade relations and even lead to multilateral cooperation with participation from other nations. So, I think it's important for us to keep a broad vision and make things happen. Also, before the annual conference, we'll release several reports, including *Annual Report, Asian Competitiveness Report,* and *Emerging Markets Report,* which have entered the final phase of compilation.

BFA Secretary-General Zhou Wenzhong. by ***Wang Lei***

A Look Back at BFA Themes

10th
ASIA
BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA
2001—2011

Since its establishment in 2001, the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) has been committed to promoting regional economic cooperation. Annual themes are pointed towards this goal, and constantly adjust to address emerging challenges and problems during Asia and the world's development. Looking back at the annual themes over the past decade, those unfamiliar with the organization can gain a better understanding of BFA development.

Long Yongtu, former Secretary-General of Boao Forum for Asia, speaks during a session.

2001 Inaugural Ceremony

On February 27, the BFA was officially established with the *Declaration of the BFA* ratified by delegates from 26 founding member states.

2002 Annual Session

From April 12 to 13, the first BFA annual conference was held with the theme "New century, new challenges, new Asia." Major discussion topics included the influence of the world economy on Asia, Asian economic rejuvenation, regional economic cooperation, China's admission to the WTO, and Asian economic development.

More than 1,900 delegates from 48 countries and regions attended the conference.

2003 Annual Session

From November 2 to 3, the second annual session was held with the theme "Asia seeking common development through cooperation." Topics including the prospect of Asian economic development and regional financial security and cooperation were discussed.

About 1,200 delegates from over 30 countries and regions attended the conference.

2004 Annual Session

The 2004 annual conference carried the theme "Asia searching for win-win: Asia opens to the world," from April 24 to 25. Against the background of globalization, discussions on regional economic cooperation and seeking effective paths to common progress highlighted talks.

More than 1,000 intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and politicians from 35 countries and regions attended the conference.

2005 Annual Session

From April 22 to 24, the 2005 annual session tweaked the theme of the previous conference to become "Asia searching for win-win: New role of Asia." Topics ranged from stabilizing energy prices to balancing mining and environmental protection, building a fair and reasonable energy system, and monetary policy and exchange rates.

Greater than 1,200 participants from commercial and industrial circles, political circles, and academia attended the meeting.

2006 Annual Session

For the April 21 to 23 annual conference, the theme "Asia searching for win-win: New opportunities of Asia, driving growth to the next level" was chosen. Hot topics about China's social and economic development took a forefront, including the development of China's banking industry, real estate industry, and state-owned enterprise innovation.

Some 850 delegates from about 40 countries and regions attended the session.

2007 Annual Session

The annual session went from April 20 to 22, with theme "Asia winning in today's global economy — Innovation and sustainable development." Discussions included economic integration, sustainable development and other pressing issues facing Asia.

A total of 1,410 delegates from 36 countries and regions attended the conference.

2008 Annual Session

The annual conference from April 11 to 13 carried the theme "Green Asia: Moving towards win-win through change." Thoughts were shared on issues such as climate change, sustainable development, cooperation, and communication between developed and developing countries.

About 1,700 politicians, business leaders and intellectuals from Asia and other parts of the world participated in the session.

2009 Annual Session

The annual conference was held from April 17 to 19 and themed "Asia: Managing beyond crisis." Against the background of global economic downturn, participants discussed the impact of the crisis on Asia and how the emerging economies can address new challenges, with the highlight being a reform of the international financial system.

The 2009 session featured the greatest number of foreign high-profile dignitaries yet, with three heads of states attending the session.

2010 Annual Session

The annual conference from April 9 to 11 focused on "Green recovery: Asia's realistic choice for sustainable growth." The Asian economy was facing a critical crossroads for restructuring and transformation. With a possibility of leading the walk out of the gravest economic recession since the 1930s, Asia still faces the daunting challenge of a green and sustainable development. In-depth discussions were carried out on these issues during the 2009 conference.

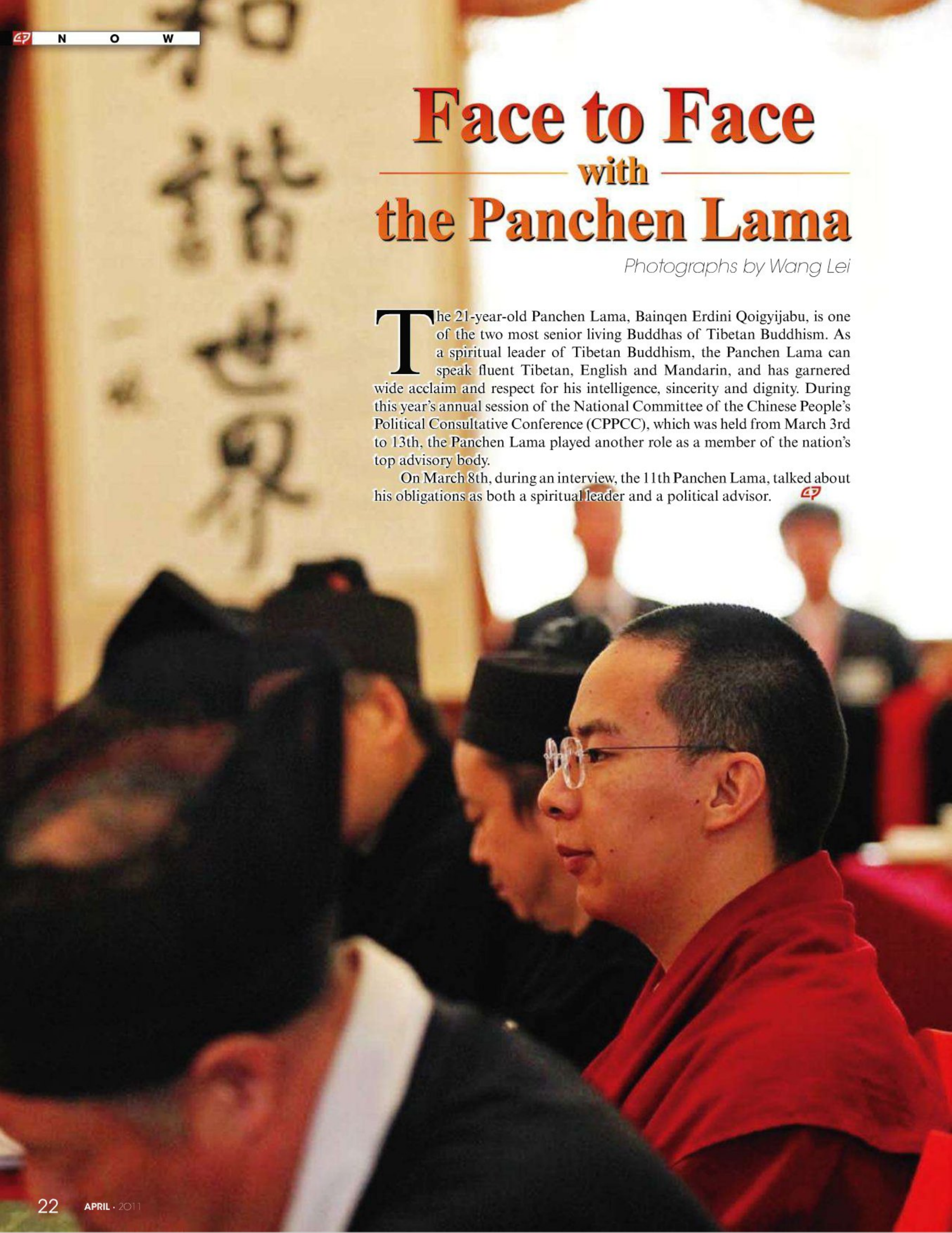
This year's event attracted about 2,000 political and business heavyweights and experts from Asia and around the world.

China-US Trade Relation:
Challenges and Cooperat
中美贸易关系：挑战与合作

BFA aims to address more challenges related to development and cooperation.

Attentive delegates.

Annual conferences of BFA attract high-end participants from a variety of fields.



Face to Face with the Panchen Lama

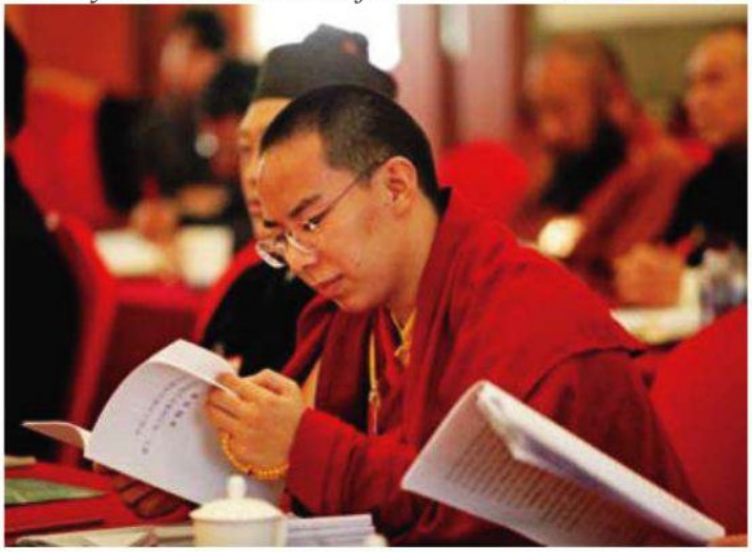
Photographs by Wang Lei

The 21-year-old Panchen Lama, Bainqen Erdini Qoigyijabu, is one of the two most senior living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism. As a spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, the Panchen Lama can speak fluent Tibetan, English and Mandarin, and has garnered wide acclaim and respect for his intelligence, sincerity and dignity. During this year's annual session of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which was held from March 3rd to 13th, the Panchen Lama played another role as a member of the nation's top advisory body.

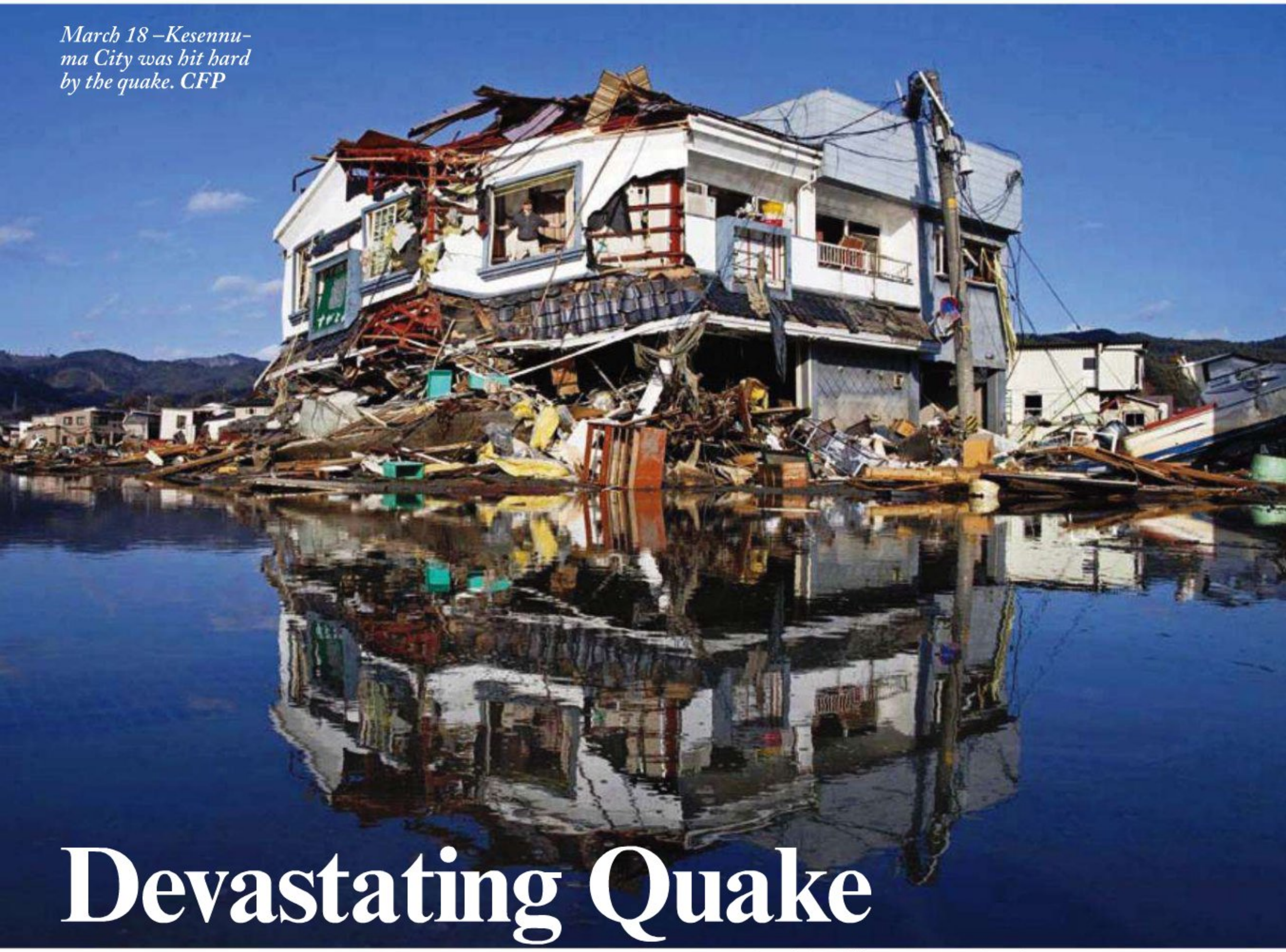
On March 8th, during an interview, the 11th Panchen Lama, talked about his obligations as both a spiritual leader and a political advisor.

"I am a CPPCC National Committee member from the religious sector. In this sector, members have various faiths, including Islam, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Buddhism. These members come from different regions and speak different dialects, but they all speak for the nation and its people."

"I still study and recite scripture during the two sessions. It's a daily assignment. I spend a proper amount of time studying, on the condition that it does not interfere with my attendance to the conference."



"I feel that Tibetan Buddhism has entered a positive phase as well as the most crucial phase in its history. There is only one way for Tibetan Buddhism, which has undergone ups and downs through the ages, to continue and thrive: it must play a part in the 21st century by promoting national prosperity, public well-being, and social harmony and stability. It's impossible for a culture to be passed on if it does not have a positive effect on society. This applies to Tibetan Buddhism too."



March 18 –Kesennuma City was hit hard by the quake. CFP

Devastating Quake Hits Japan

Text by Mu Mu

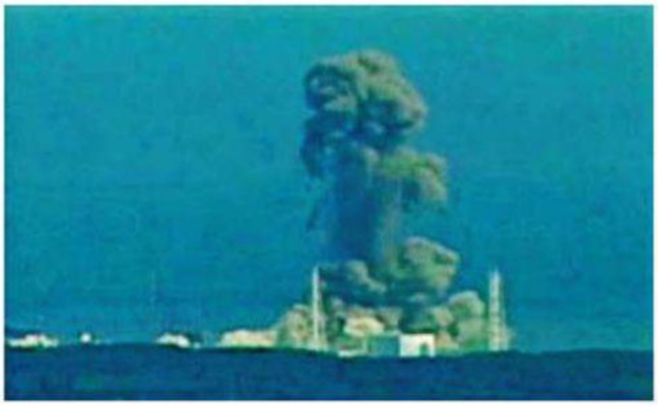
March 11 - Houses in flames while the Natori River floods the surrounding area after the tsunami hit Natori City, Miyagi Prefecture. CFP

Never send to know for whom the bell tolls. On March 11, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake hit Japan's northeastern Honshu Island at 1:46 p.m., local time. With the epicenter in the Pacific just off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture in eastern Japan, the deadly quake struck at a depth of 10 kilometers, and triggered a massive tsunami off Japan's east coast, causing massive casualties and property damage. As of press time, ensuing aftershocks have been rocking the country, the largest with a magnitude of 7.1. The total death toll has reached 8928, and the number is believed to climb up in the future.

According to reports, the hardest-hit areas include Miyagi, Fukushima, and Iwate prefectures on Japan's eastern coast. A 10-meter-high tsunami swept away hundreds of houses, cars, and even ships in just seconds, flooding farmland and highways. Minamisanriku of Miyagi Prefecture used to be home to 17,000 residents, but now about 9,500 people are missing, roughly half of the population. The tsunami also devoured a ship carrying 100 people along with four trains carrying an unknown number of people. The quake was felt strongly in Tokyo, where operation of subways and Shinkansen bullet trains was suspended. Narita and Haneda airports were forced to shut down and dozens of fires broke out in the city, causing blackout for 4.05 million households.

March 16 – Chieko Chiba walks through the rubble of her destroyed home in Kesennuma, Miyagi Prefecture. CFP

The quake also caused serious problems for Japan's nuclear power plants. A hydrogen explosion rocked the No. 1 reactor of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. According to Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, radiation has been detected near the No.1 reactor, possibly because of damage to nuclear fuel rods. At the same time, the cooling system of Fukushima No.2 nuclear power plant began to malfunction. The Japanese government has declared states of emergencies at the two nuclear power plants, and a 20 kilometer-radius evacuation zone has been established around the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant along with a 10 kilometer-radius zone around No.2 plant. Also, fire broke out at the Onagawa nuclear power plant, Miyagi Prefecture, result-



March 14 – Screencap of an explosion at the No.3 reactor of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

March 13 – A man walks through the rubble in Minamisanriku town, Iwate Prefecture. CFP ing in an emergency evacuation of 2,800 residents.

Due to the massive quake and subsequent devastating tsunami, tsunami warnings were issued across Pacific areas. The entire Pacific went on alert, but waves were not as bad as expected and didn't cause as much damage as estimated.

The Japanese government reacted immediately after the quake, sending tremendous manpower and resources into relief efforts. Prime Minister Kan Naoto made a television address, asking citizens to remain calm. Over 20,000 members of the Japanese Self Defense Force were mobilized to aid the relief effort, and that number has been increasing as relief work progresses. Civilians and enterprises are joining hands to help relief work. Japanese beverage maker Suntory announced that all of their vending machine drinks would be free after the quake — just hit the buttons. Convenience store chains such as 7-11 and Family Mart provided free food and drinking water. Public phones and internet communication were also free — hoping to aid timely information dissemination and communication.

At the junction of the Pacific and Eurasian Plates, Japan experiences 1,000 earthquakes annually. Plate collision and extrusion frequently result in stratum deformation and breakage, bringing volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. Tokyo alone experiences about 40 earthquakes annually. Massive earthquakes have rocked the country many times in history, causing huge casualties and property loss. On September 1, 1923, a devastating earthquake on the Kanto Plain caused mass destruction and a death toll over 100,000. The March 13 Japan earthquake was the fifth largest recorded on earth since 1900.

The international community has shown great concern since the quake. Chinese premier Wen Jiabao sent a telegraph to Prime Minister Kan Naoto, expressing China's deep concerns and condolences and willingness to provide necessary help. On March 12, emergency aid worth 1 million RMB was sent to Japan by the Red Cross Society of China. On March 13, China International Search and Rescue Team arrived in Japan to aid quake rescue operations. United States, Russia, and South Ko-

March 14 - Soldiers from the Japan Self-Defense Force and firefighters search for the victims in the rubble in Matsushima, Miyagi Prefecture. CFP

March 16 - In snow, China International Search and Rescue Team aids rescue efforts in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture.

rea also joined relief efforts.

The massive earthquake has already affected not only the Japanese economy, but also the global marketplace. On March 11, Asian stocks plunged, and Japan's Nikkei index took a nose dive. David Cohen of Action Economics predicts a 1 percent slip of Japan's GDP in the short term. Yasuo Yamamoto, senior analyst with Mizuho Research Institute, believes that although it is still too early to calculate the full scale of the damage, past earthquakes have shown that the government will compile an emergency budget, supporting the claim that total GDP will be reduced in a short term. However, according to Moody's Investors Service, a leading global credit rater, the quake had a negligible impact on Japan's sterling rating.

On China's Internet, numerous people are expressing concern and condolences to the country. On t.sina.com.cn, one statement from a neitzen has been passed on 5,000 times: "After seeing the massive quake in Japan, I recalled what Ernest Hemingway wrote in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. 'No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' "

A family rests with their dog at a shelter at Minamisanriku. CFP

March 13 - A girl in a shelter in Fukushima Prefecture. CFP

March 14 - Evacuees gather in candlelight at a blacked out shelter in Yamamoto, Miyagi Prefecture. CFP

A mother watches over her baby who was born on March 2 at a shelter in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture. CFP

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Beauty Sky Dreams

Every person and entity possesses equal opportunity to create and invent, however, not all entrepreneurs ever take the chance to build their own brands.

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Beauty Sky endured the journey yesterday, building a brand with wisdom.

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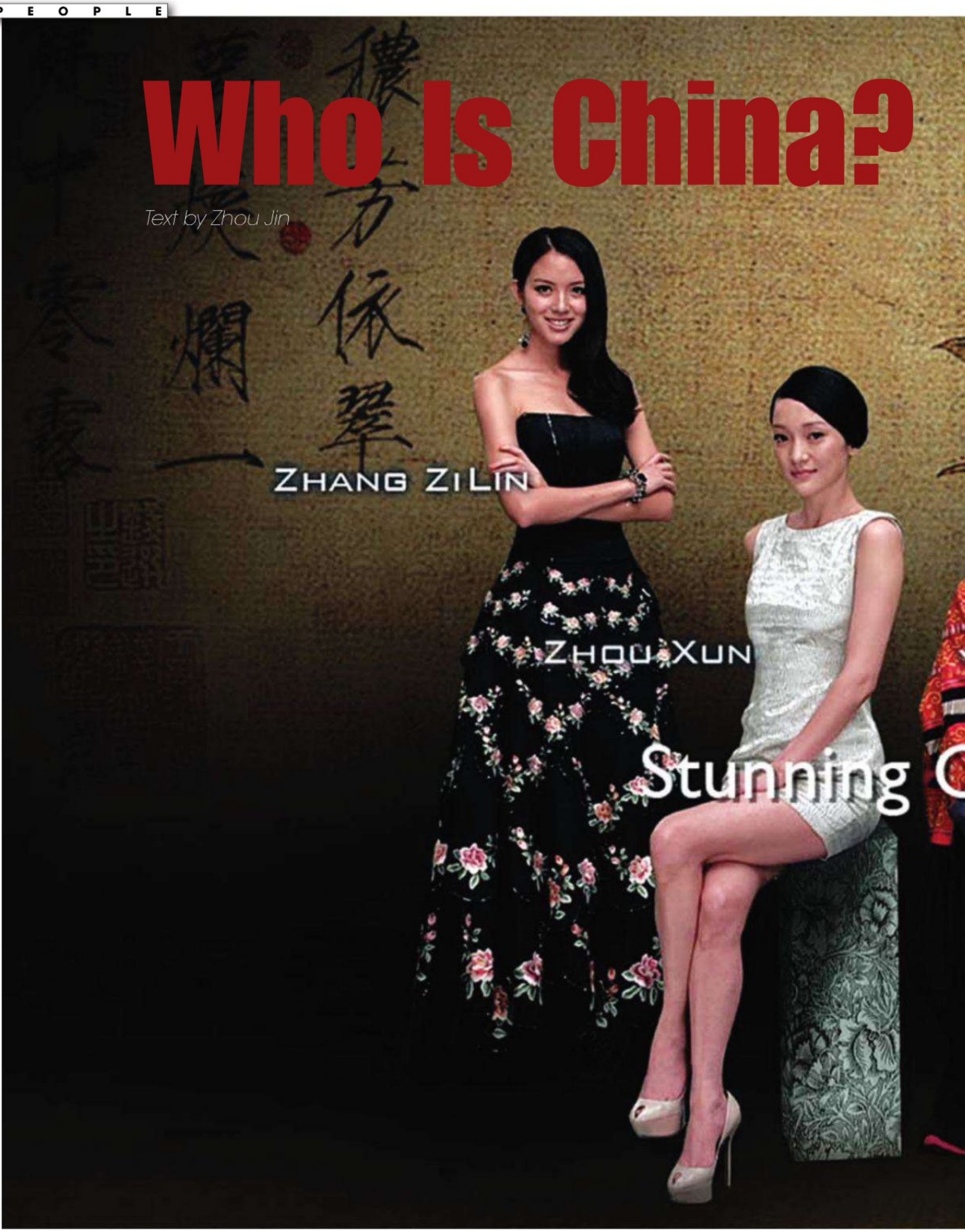
Who Is China?

Text by Zhou Jin


ZHANG ZILIN
ZHOU XUN
Stunning

Interview with Adrian Zhu, Chief Designer of China's National Publicity Film

Zhang Ziyi
Fan Bingbing
Yang Liping
Chinese Beauty

Lintas
灵狮中国

Adrian Zhu. by Dong Fang

Few of those who visited New York City's Times Square in late January and early February missed the lineup of Chinese faces blown up on the massive screens. After a long and elaborate production process that lasted more than a year, "Experience China" made its debut on January 18 as China's official national publicity spot targeting mainstream Western society. The advertisement followed a late-2009 ad commissioned to promote "Made in China" products on televisions across several Western countries..

Screened just ahead of President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington, the national promo, highlighting a diverse mix of Chinese celebrities, prominent figures, and ordinary people from different walks of life, touched many Chinese tourists passing Times Square. However, along with the praise came some criticism. Some questioned whether running the ad over 8,000 times in four weeks would be excessive, and others argued that the foreign audience can't understand the themes conveyed by the lineup of figures since they are unfamiliar with most of them. More importantly, it has been debated whether the ad was produced in a form that would provoke the right response from the intended audience.

China Pictorial caught up with Adrian Zhu, Lintas' China Region Executive Creative Director and producer of the ad, on February 11 for an interview in his Shanghai office. Zhu shed light on the film's conception, shooting, expenditure, and intention.

China Pictorial: The ad has no grand scene, and some footage is simple. Why did you choose 'people' to represent China's national image, and did you find inspiration during the production process?

Adrian Zhu: As soon as the idea of shooting a national publicity ad was being thrown around, I began scouring foreign-produced documentaries on subjects related to China, as well as foreign narrative movie scenes depicting China. At times, the content would only contain a single sentence, but I contemplated the reasoning behind the scene and from which angle their intention came.

Ad inspiration can strike instantly, but the best ideas come only after a long accumulative process. While designing the ad, I discussed ideas and gathered feedback from many foreign friends. They had seen plenty of scenes showing the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers and the Great Wall, as well as Peking Opera, calligraphy, martial arts, and other elements of traditional Chinese culture, which hardly represent a well-rounded depiction of modern Chinese society. "We want to see a vivid face of China," they kept telling me, and this sentence inspired me.

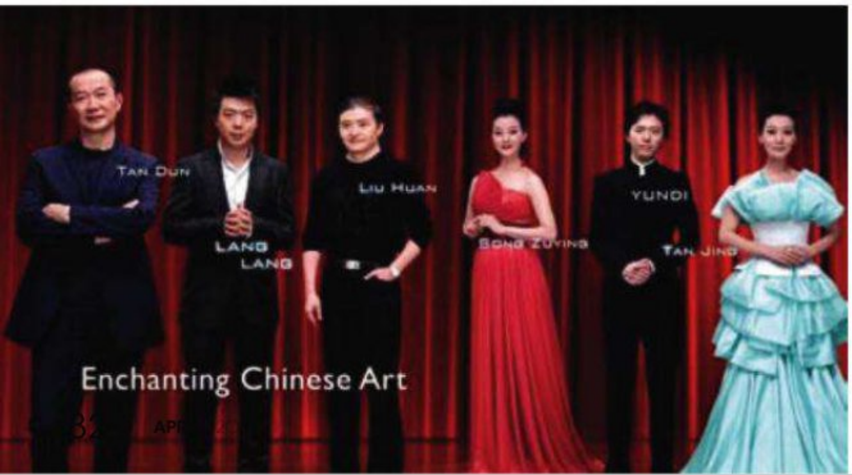
In the beginning, we submitted several proposals, and of them I particularly loved the one focusing on people, although I expected rejection since it seemed like a bold concept. The idea of choosing a dozen or so people to represent another 1.3 billion clearly sounds like a risky proposition.

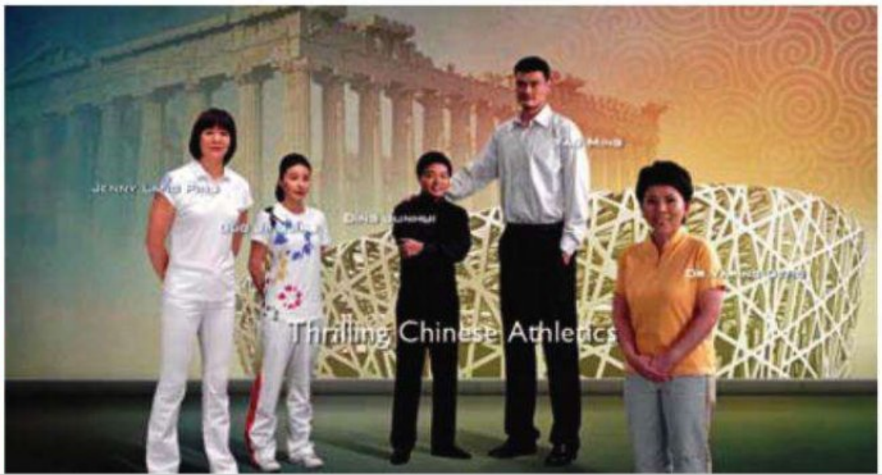
To my surprise, the idea of showcasing modern China through figures recognized by the international community received a stamp of approval from the State Council Information Office (SCIO).

CP: What were your criteria for selecting the figures?

Zhu: A golden rule of advertising is simplicity.

In general, when speaking of a nation, people tend to mention fertile land and beautiful scenery, so these things have been heard hundreds of times. Therefore, we think in contrasting ways. To understand a nation, you must first understand its people. The people, who are influenced by the world and at the same time whose own influence is growing, deserve respect and notability. To ensure a list of names as representative as possible, we took several factors into consideration, such as ethnic and geographical demographics, as well as weighting particularly moving figures, such as Tai Lihua (a talented deaf dancer).





Model Zhang Zilin, for example, was chosen to represent China's fashion. Unlike many American and Japanese women who choose to become housewives after marriage, married Chinese women generally continue working and pursuing a career. China has experienced huge aesthetic transitions from tastes of the 1950s, when Xing Yanzi (a model educated youth working in the countryside) was well-known and admired, through the idea that beauty contests discriminate against women, to the point where as much honor is heaped on beauty pageant winners as Olympic champions. Therefore, we chose the beautiful model to play a part in representing Chinese women.

Of course, we didn't miss Zhang Ziyi, who is indisputably the best-known Chinese movie starlet to the international community. With her, we also selected Zhou Xun. Her delicate, pure, and innocent look coupled with superb acting skill make her one of Chinese movie-goers' favorite actresses.

It can be said that the publicity spot includes outstanding Chinese people in a variety of fields, whose enterprise, diligence, and motivation, as well as beauty and benevolence, combine to compose the key melody of contemporary Chinese society, fueling China's rise in the world.

CP: Some media outlets are rumbling that foreigners are not familiar with those Chinese elites and some didn't even get it. How would you respond to such comments?

Zhu: This happened indeed. But I think attitude is more important. When the video was aired in the U.S., the American audience cared more about what we were trying to say, while we cared how they perceive us. In the past, for some reason, they thought we didn't care about their opinion. Now, through the video, we hope such an impression can be changed. We hope they like us. After all, the U.S. remains an important partner along the road of China's development.

The figures in the film are real, excellent, and sensational — this is the information we were commissioned to convey. The production can be considered successful as long as there are some who, after seeing the film, develop an interest in China and spend some time searching the net for more information about any of the figures.

This is advertising. You can never expect too much from an advertisement. If the ad helps one Westerner have a good impression of China, it has achieved some success. Many Westerners I know confessed that only after setting foot in China did they realize to what extent they were misled, and that much of what they were previously shown was selective.

The national promo graces screens in NYC's Times Square.

During this year's Spring Festival, I met several Chinese friends just back from the States. They told me they were excited to see the lineup of so many Chinese faces on Times Square's big screens, all with radiant smiles. Technically speaking, the ad has accomplished its goal of publicity. Many American mainstream media outlets, including CNN, *Wall Street Journal,* and *New York Times,* reported on the release of the ad. Building national image through advertisement shows a new shift in Chinese diplomatic strategy, according to one report.

CP: Others have said that "Experience China" is nothing more than a simple archive of different faces.

Zhu: A national image ad should not showcase the torrential waves of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, the magnificent gate of the Forbidden City, or ethnic people warmly welcoming visitors with song and dance. The SCIO's mission is different from that of China National Tourism Administration.

Advertisement must be simple, allowing the targets to clearly understand the information in a short time, and complicated form and heavy content can't produce this effect. Therefore, we minimized movement, aiming to highlight the graceful and poised grandeur of China. I recommend seeing the video's HD version on the internet, in which you can see the slightest nuances in facial expressions.

"Experience China" involves 59 persons, each of whom has rich experience, with impressive and touching stories. It's not a pool of people, but a selection of those who represent China in certain fields. What we are trying to depict is real-life Chinese people.

In front of our camera, the scientists, economists, and astronauts seemed a bit constrained, hesitantly showing us a "professional smile" with eight teeth exposed. I often used this anecdote with the media: When shooting master architect Zhang Yonghe, the director had a hard time getting him to smile. After several takes, Zhang asked, "Do you mean simper?" The director replied, "As long as you feel natural and comfortable."

These figures are filled with such strength that they naturally emit an irresistible spiritual charm.

Tiger Zhang
He Jingtang
Chang Yung Ho
Aesthetic Chinese Design

Liu Guochang
Jin Jing
Lin Hao
Donnie Yen
Inspiring Chinese Bravery

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Weather or Not?

Concerns from a British Photographer

Text by Zhou Jin
Photographs courtesy of Sean Gallagher

Spring brings gusts of sand and dust that blanket the entire city, causing incredible inconvenience.

Briton Sean Gallagher has recorded his experience in China through lenses, and his pictures have stunned both Chinese people and foreigners. One of his pictures depicts a woman in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region during a spring sandstorm, covering her face.

It has been four years since Gallagher arrived in China, and since then he has been working on three projects for the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting concerning environmental issues, primarily desertification and the disappearance of wetlands.

Water! Water!

"I wasn't educated in photography," Gallagher reveals. "I studied science. Before I came to China, I started taking pictures as a hobby. Then, my hobby evolved into my profession. So, I decided to add my natural interest in environmental issues into my photography."

Asked why he chose the camera as his tool to record the things he sees, Gallagher replied, "Images transcend language barriers. Pictures are very special. Through photography, we see the world differently. It has become my responsibility to use my skill to help more people understand the world."

Over the past four years, Gallagher has traveled to a wide range of Chinese areas, including Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Chongqing Municipality, and Zhejiang and Guangdong Provinces. His journeys weren't always easy, but Gallagher rarely complains thanks to his sense of responsibility and solid support from his family.

Ever the optimist, Gallagher has enjoyed the constant contrast of the places he has visited. "There are so many feelings," he remarks. "This is one of the things I like about China. Issues I covered over the past few years such as desertification and wetland degradation are major water problems that are plaguing many parts of China. I try to tell small stories in many different places and connect them with each other."

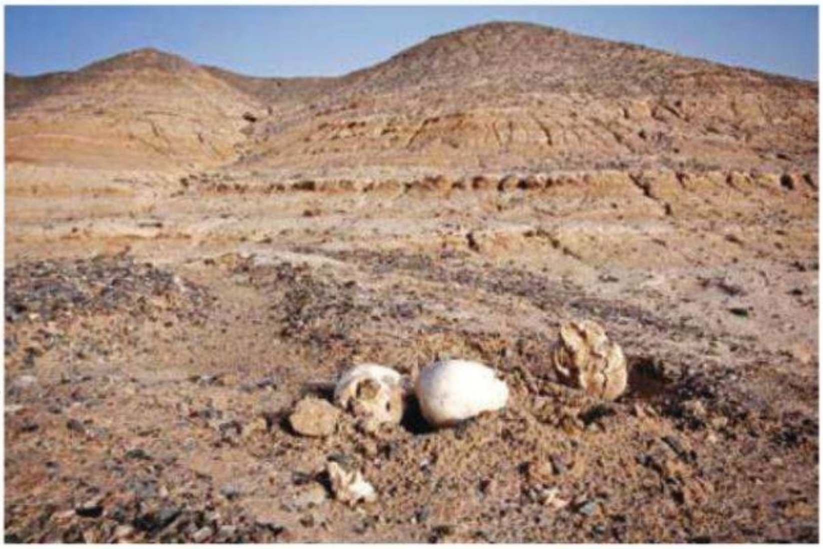
Water shortage is a growing problem both in China and for the entire world. Desertification continues as factors such as population increase, inadequate management of water resources, poor efficiency in farming, industrial land abuse, and global warming fuel its rise. A recent survey noted the shocking fact that over the past 2,000 years, approximately 40 cities in northern China were abandoned due to desertification.

Yingpan, an ancient township about 300 kilometers east of Korle, Xinjiang, is one example. It was once a bustling city along the ancient Silk Road. Experts knew little about its mysterious disappearance until 1898 when British archaeologist Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943) discovered its ruins, which evidenced that it was once inhabited by more than 10,000 people and featured city walls, military stations, and temples.

In Gallagher's pictures, Yingpan appears starkly different from its heydays. Skulls and tools are scattered about, and the former hub is buried under spring sandstorms and summer floods.

In August 2010, commissioned by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, Sean Gallagher traversed China to document ever-shrinking wetlands. Pictured is a Yangtze alligator habitat, one end of the wetland food chain.

A man labors to push his bicycle through the sandstorm, Inner Mongolia.



Bones and relics of an ancient lost city are scattered around Yingpan Ruins, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regions.

Changing Minds

"My job isn't always easy," Gallagher explains. "I try to find small things, tiny pieces, as a window into the past."

"If you take a picture of a festival, it's always easy," he continues. "For this picture, I was out standing in the storm. I wanted to see how desertification affected local people." He flips to a different picture. "These people (in Inner Mongolia) used to inhabit grassland. Modern life has stopped them from moving. Nomadic culture is only a memory."

All his photos express concern for desertification in northwestern China, which has severely changed lifestyles there.

"Four years is not enough time to properly address subjects like desertification and wetlands," Gallagher asserts. "Many people have asked me, 'What are the effects of your photos?' That's a tough question, which I have often pondered. My role is to make sure that as many people as possible see these images. I continue telling people over and over – students, scientists, all kinds of people. You never know what action they're going to take. Maybe their minds will change. Maybe they'll join an environmental protection group…"

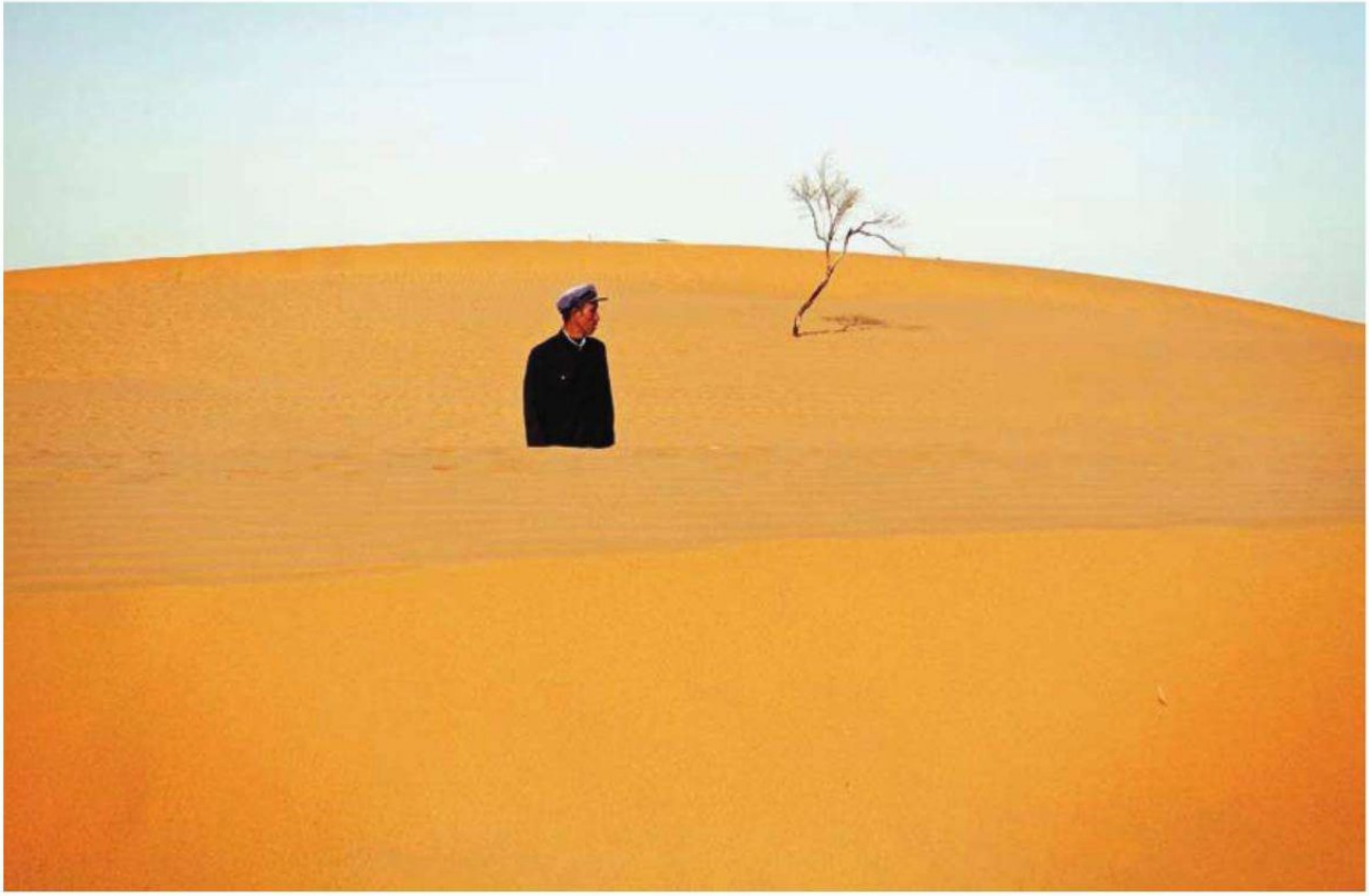
Gallagher is fully aware that a single photographer can't shoulder such a burden. However, he knows that he can only share his pictures with as many people as possible.

Two days before the interview, Gallagher presented a photo exhibition at the 798 Inter Gallery/Art Center and at a bar named Yugong Yishan (The Foolish Old Man Who Moved Mountains), both in Beijing. "I think the answers to these questions – desertification, wetlands, and global warming – don't come just from me, but from scientists, artists, the public, government, media, from everyone. And we should all move together in the same direction. Then you will see a positive change. I'm just doing my part. My job is to help more people know the facts. Let each person choose his own action."

Photographer's Responsibility

On one side of Gallagher's business card is one of his photos: An old man walks over a sand dune with a withered tree bending behind him.

"The relationship between man and nature is fragile," Gallagher notes. "In many places I visited, there were not



On the reverse of Sean Gallagher's business card is one of his works: A man crossing a deserted sandy terrain, only to see a lonely tree.

many people. So, I tried to use the few people in my pictures to illustrate this fragile relationship. I hope people consider the relationship rather than just the scenes."

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is China's most poverty-stricken area, and its weather doesn't enhance tourism potential. It suffers through some of the worst sandstorms ever seen in the country. "When it came, the sand and dust completely filled the air, blotting out the sky and covering the sun," recalls one local. Not only have such disasters plagued China over the past few years, but they have also afflicted neighboring countries such as South Korea and Japan, and effects have even been seen as far away as the West Coast of the United States.

Compared with news photography chronicling current events, pictures depicting environmental problems are usually less soul-stirring. So, the wait for photographers to see their work make a difference is longer.

"It's no bother," Gallagher smiles. "For me, I only care about the story – my responsibility."

Unlike many foreign visitors who travel to China for vacation, Sean Gallagher chooses to visit more isolated and untouched places.

"My journey in China is more about responsibility," he affirms. "Before I go out, I do a lot of research and reading to find the best places and examples for a particular subject. Much of my work is in making the right choices for destination.

"There are several places I want to visit before I leave. But it depends on how much research I can complete – and a little luck. Sometimes I just need to trust my instincts. A lot of times, successful photographs require a lot of luck. This is true for all kinds of pictures: environmental, sports, anything. But hard work creates good luck. I always believe that the next great picture is just around the corner.

"Many people don't even know that issues such as desertification and disappearance of wetlands are growing problems," Gallagher continues. "I am often surprised by these people. I reveal to them new issues in their country. Some people lament that foreign photographers come to China to take pictures of 'bad things.' Desertification and dried-up wetlands are not happy subjects. I try to tell people, 'Look, this is China, your country,' but they're not uniquely Chinese problems. For example, when I see wetlands shrinking, I worry for wetlands not only in China and Asia, but for wetlands in my home country. So I feel it's my obligation.

"I try as hard as I can to get the message out."

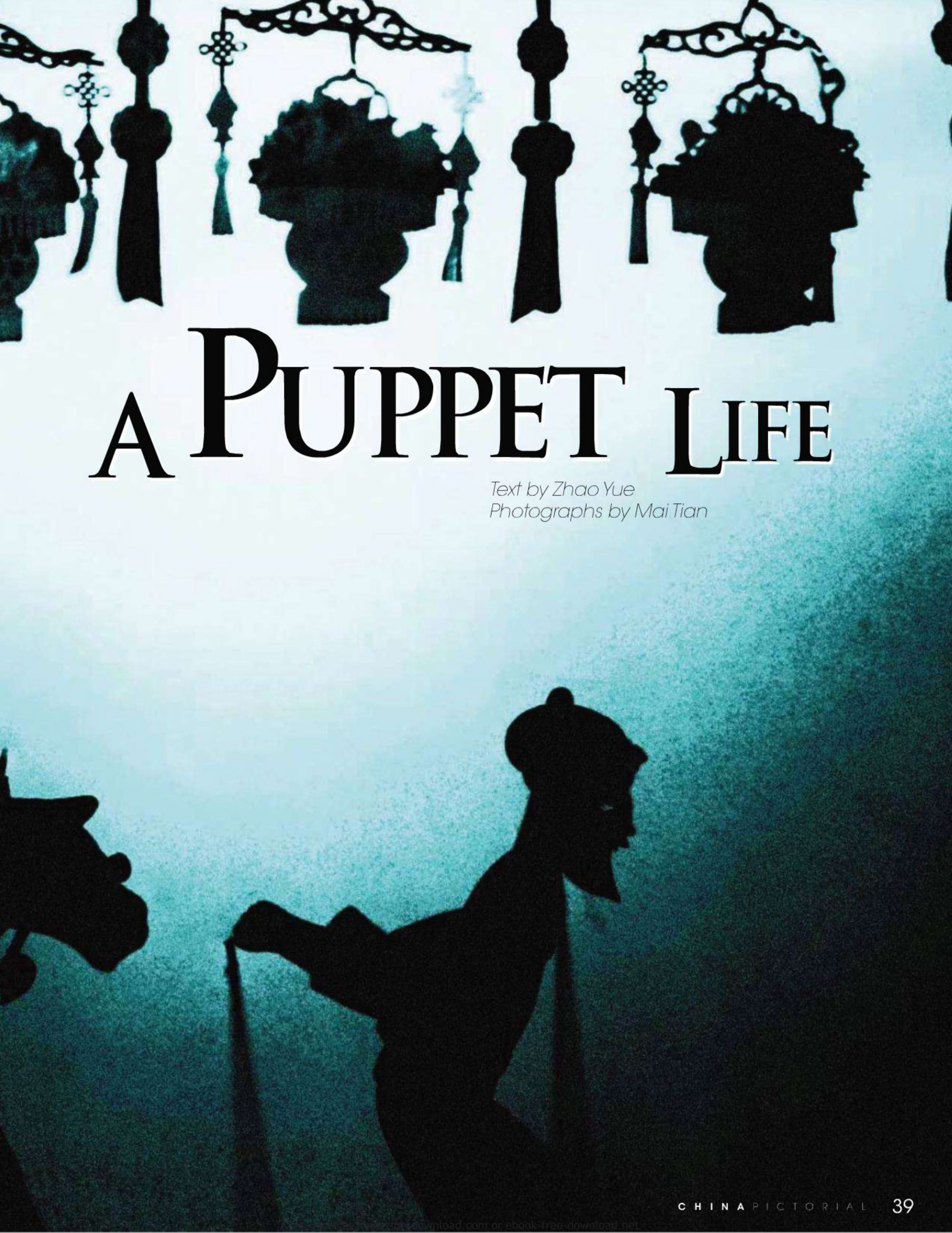
Other than the door plate and notice on the wall, the first floor of Jinqiao Garden's Building 16 appears identical to other houses. However, here lies China's oldest and largest private museum devoted to shadow puppetry.

In December 2010, a *New York Times* article titled *Puppet Masters Try to Bring Art Out of the Shadows* brought a global spotlight to the art form as well as to Cui Yongping and his wife, curators of the museum. Cui's exhibit is China's only to combine performance with a puppet collection. Although the museum displays only 10,000, Cui's staggering collection of over 120,000 puppets includes items from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, as well as from the Republic of China period (1912-1949) that were gathered from Hebei, Shandong, Sichuan, and Shaanxi provinces. With puppets created to depict a wide variety of topics such as legends, folklore, fairy tales, and myths, much of Cui's collection is singular even in China. *The New York Times* remarked, "The Cui Yongping Shadow Play Art Museum exhibits shadow puppets. Which is like saying the Louvre exhibits paintings." Yet contrasting the Louvre's lack of mobility, during Chinese New Year 2011, the Cuis and their treasures left for the United States.

A PUPPET LIFE

Text by Zhao Yue

Photographs by Mai Tian



The Master

Born in Beijing in 1945, at the age of 14, Cui entered Shunde Puppet Play Troupe, then the only professional puppet troupe in Beijing. His decision was more out of necessity than passion — as the oldest of six children he needed to earn money for his siblings' tuition. However, the adolescent quickly fell in love with puppetry and eagerly soaked up everything he could about performance, composition, and play writing.

Part of Cui's collection. Puppet performances can be ingenious. The audience sees a sort of cartoon — colorful figures dancing across the sheet.

Wang Shuqin (left) and her student perform for children during a charity program.

A year passed quickly. One day, the student asked a teacher why he couldn't find any textbooks, academic writing, or historical records related to puppetry. "You may very well be the person who compiles the history of our trade," teased the teacher, unaware that he was making a prophecy.

Cui took the statement as a challenge. At age 15, he began mapping puppet history and gathering puppets from different places.

Cui met classmate and fellow puppet trouper Wang Shuqin in 1961. At the time, Wang was 18 and Cui was only 16. The youngsters quickly became inseparable, eventually married, and ever since Wang has been supporting her husband's passion with all her heart.

In 1993, Cui suffered a stroke. Although treatment saved his life, the devastating event crippled his right arm and hobbled his speech, a fatal blow to a puppeteer. Not surprisingly, puppeteering is extremely demanding on a performer's hands, requiring the subtlest of moves to rods controlling heads and mouths. Also, a performer must speak the characters' lines. Still, Cui and Wang saved hope. Starting in 1995, Cui and his wife blanketed the nation in search of puppets. Gradually, their collection multiplied. In a village in Hebei Province they found a Ming Dynasty collection depicting torture in the 18 levels of Hell. From another village's trash heap, they salvaged puppets devoted to China's resistance against Japan in World War II.

Puppet Museum

In 2003, Cui's Xinjiekou home was demolished. Using the compensation funds and money from their kids, the couple bought two apartments in Majuqiao, southern Beijing, which would become the museum. For the first time in his life, he could taste his dream.

He sorted his collection, which included a plethora of items from different eras and geographical locations across China, not to mention those he received as gifts, or made himself. In 2003, Cui spent three months making 500 puppet heads with only his left hand, before stitching them all on a piece of large cloth, just one step in his great endeavors to apply to open a private museum.

In 2004, the couple submitted their application for a private puppet museum to the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage. Cui had been keeping touch with several cultural department officials over the years, and he soon got an oral green light. But still, protocol required an expert appraisal.

"Eight senior experts in culture and history arrived, the eldest being 72," recalls Wang like it was yesterday. "After seeing our collection, not a dry eye could be found and they heartily approved our application."

On April 22 of that year, the couple's puppet museum finally opened to the public, making the life-long dream a reality. The massive collection stunned visitors and attracted large crowds of foreign students visiting China to study puppet making and performance. The couple was invited overseas to deliver lectures and performances.

Since their museum opened to the public, most visitors have been foreign, a slight disappointment to the couple.

Cui Yongping and his wife perform for an audience.

Puppets from Gansu Province. China Fotobank

However, few Chinese people showed much interest in the art, which can be traced back 1,000 years earlier than Peking Opera. The fact that the museum was located far from downtown without convenient transportation also didn't help. Of 20,000 annual visitors, foreigners made up a large proportion. Even some residents in the neighborhood thought the Cuis' home only served as a puppet workshop. For several years, the museum faced financial difficulties, and the couple struggled to survive on only the meager ticket sales and their pensions.

A Difficult Road Ahead

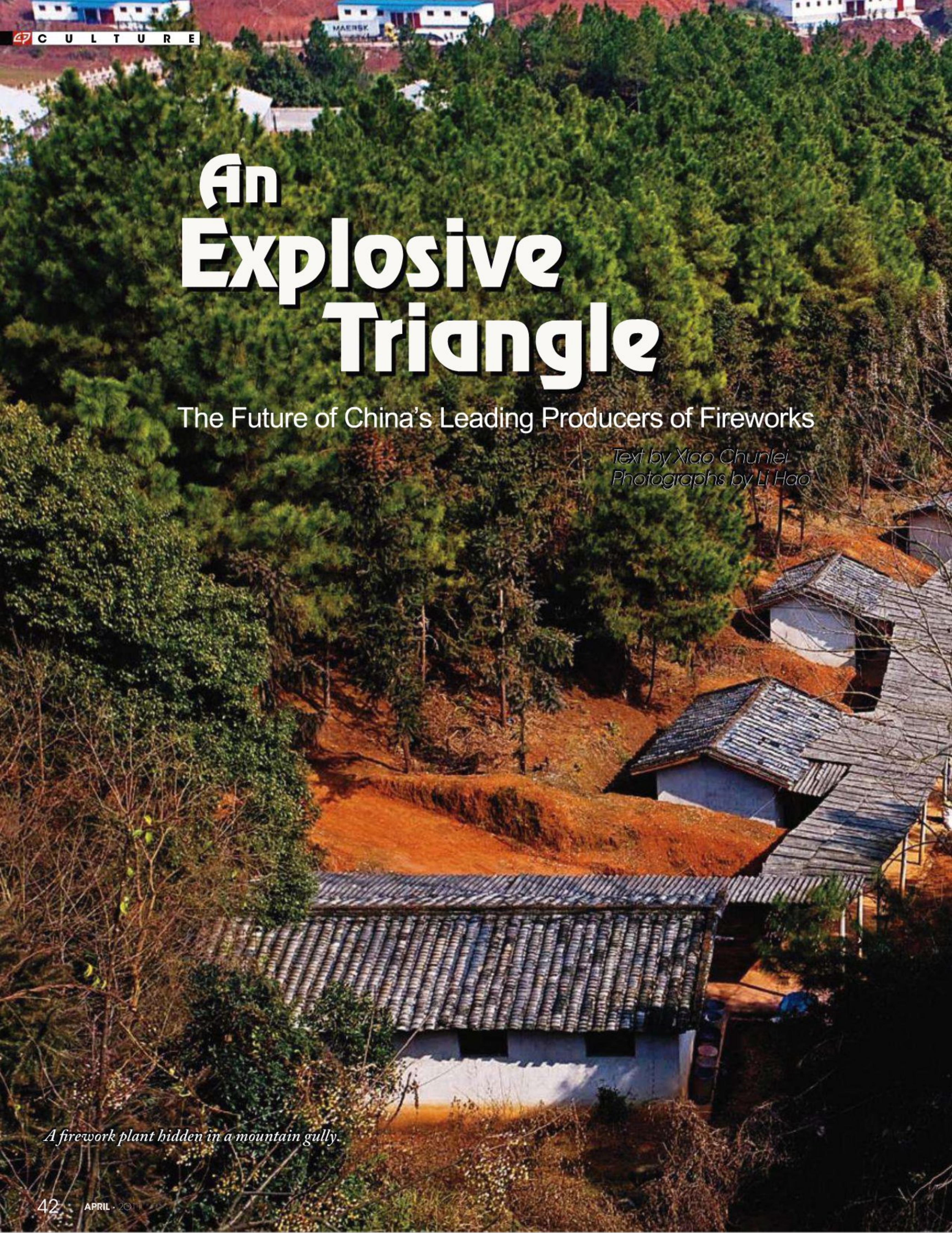
Michael Wines, current Beijing bureau chief of *The New York Times*, brought global attention to Cui with his report at the end of 2010. Wines illustrated that while United States' history dates back only about 300 years, China has been around for 5,000. Perhaps this is part of the reason Americans have always been interested in magnificent histories. "Mr. Cui's puppets are real art," Wines noted.

After the 2011 lunar New Year, the closed museum began drawing increased attention. After some digging, a Beijing newspaper found a telephone number for Cui's son in New York City. "So glad to hear a voice from Beijing," chuckled Cui's wife, Wang Shuqin, as she excitedly picked up the phone. She insisted that the couple wasn't planning to emigrate, but rather only spreading their love for the art while visiting their son. However, their big picture for the future includes a "branch museum" in the United States.

The couple keeps a busy schedule in America, including free performances at various universities, the most recent being Columbia. "We're not leaving China," Wang remarks. They will return in July to re-open their museum, which they still consider the culmination of their life's work.

Lin Zhonghua, Cui's fellow puppeteer and founder of China Puppet Cultural City, has much to say. Presently, fewer than 10 professional puppet masters can be found in Beijing. With all of them well past 60, the puppet arts are teetering in a precarious position.

Lin believes the traditional craft should find a place in the open market. "It is not that the government is uninterested," he explains, "but I think they prefer a more flexible way to carry it on." According to Lin, China Puppet Cultural City didn't turn a profit until 2010. "Continuing development is the best protection."



An Explosive Triangle

The Future of China's Leading Producers of Fireworks

Text by Xiao Chunlei
Photographs by Li Hao

A firework plant hidden in a mountain gully.

Either delighting eyes with dazzling splendor or inspiring ears with awesome noise, fireworks and firecrackers, both children of gunpowder, are usually coupled like wild twins in celebrations of traditional Chinese festivals.

Customs related to fireworks and firecrackers can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907). According to *Book of Strange Stories,* a collection of fantastic novels, the firecracker was invented by a man named Li Tian. Legend has it that to save his neighbor from harassment by mountain ghosts, Li burned bamboo at dawn and dusk, and the cracking sound eventually drove away the spirits. Another tale goes that when Tang Emperor Taizong summoned ideas for treatment of his disease, Li Tian traveled to the capital with 100 homemade bamboo devices filled with gunpowder, which effectively dispelled the malignancy. The emperor crowned Li "Father of Firecrackers." Along with the evolution of the art, Li Tian became a mythological figure, eventually being widely worshipped as the god of the industry in firework production regions.

China is a big producer of fireworks and firecrackers, with nearly 80 percent of the national production coming from Hunan's Liuyang and Liling and Jiangxi's Pingxiang, where temples erected for Li Tian are plentiful.

In China, sale of fireworks and firecrackers is exclusively managed and controlled by authorities.

In China, firecrackers are crucial for important occasions like weddings and funerals.

Liuyang, known as the "Capital of Fireworks," often inspires images of a hub of crowded stores. Actually, it is more similar to other ordinary cities, with quiet streets void of firework shops, which instead congregate at a single specialized market. However, even visitors to the market are surprised to find a deserted scene except for a colorful lineup of posters advertising firework staples such as paper, molds, winding drums, down-lead, and chemicals. Firework sample outlets are either closed or visited by very few customers.

On display are only gunpowder-free samples, according to a division head from Liuyang Administration of Fireworks and Firecrackers. Due to their danger, fireworks and firecrackers are subject to special laws and regulations in terms of transportation, storage, trade, and usage, in addition to a licensing system. Outside buyers arriving in Liuyang usually go straight to the factories, so this wholesale market primarily specializes in raw and auxiliary materials needed to produce fireworks and firecrackers.

Statistics released by Liuyang Administration of Fireworks and Firecrackers show that as the city's major industry, Liuyang's fireworks and firecrackers accounted for a sales volume of 11 billion yuan in 2009, more than any other city in the country. Liuyang's fireworks are mainly exported, contributing largely to China's 90 percent share of the international market of such products. In 2009, Liuyang's exported fireworks and firecrackers yielded US$338 million, accounting for 67 percent of China's total export volume in the industry. No one can doubt Liuyang's position as the world's largest production and trade center for fireworks, as well as the leading global distribution hub for related raw and auxiliary materials.

As dangerous products under strict surveillance and control, fireworks and firecrackers are rarely seen in urban districts. All the plants for such products are constructed in mountain valleys, and from a distance, they appear like a military defense network nestled in mountain-protected trenches.

Although under the jurisdiction of two different provinces, Liuyang, Liling, and Pingxiang combine to form what is nicknamed the "golden triangle of fireworks and firecrackers." Their geographic proximity leads to similar production modes and lifestyles. Debate over the actual location of the origin of fireworks has never ceased, but when Li Tian's home is mentioned, Director Chen of Liling Administration of Fireworks and Firecrackers highly recommends Mashi Street. "We believe Li Tian was a native to this place," he asserts. "Interestingly, Liling is only home to one side of Mashi, while the other side of the street is located in Jiangxi Province's Shangli County, which also has a temple of Li Tian. But the historical theatrical stage is on our side in Liling, and people can watch the performances from across the street in Shangli."

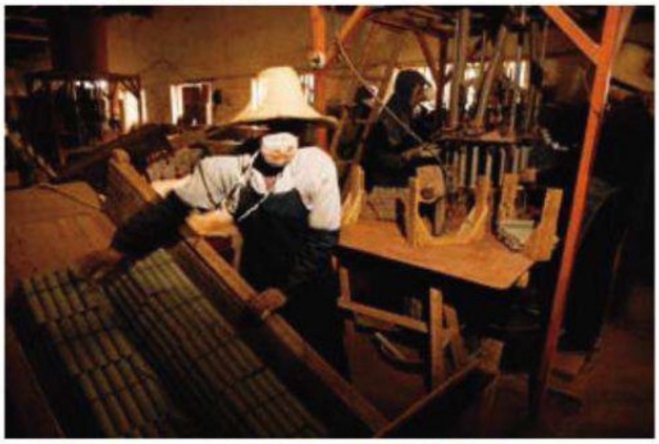
On the street, the former residence of Li Tian, next to Dragon King Temple, is a paramount attraction. Each year, on the 18th day of the fourth lunar month, the legendary birthday of Li Tian, as well as during other festivals, local villagers invite art troupes to perform in the square in front of the Dragon King Temple. With Mashi Street at its core, the area with a radius of 10 kilometers is the three cities' traditional production base for fireworks.

Originally, fireworks and firecrackers were only produced on Mashi Street, but as time passed, surrounding villagers joined. The sector's influence then quickly radiated like ripples to peripheral districts which already shared the geographical and cultural environment, and so the spread of firework culture and Li Tian worship came naturally.

Gunpowder, invented in China, is the basic raw material for fireworks and firecrackers.

Working carefully.

Because of the extreme danger related to firework and firecracker manufacture, superstition abounds in production seats, where workers use talismanic symbols for blessings from deities.



A firework workshop.

Most firecracker plants still produce manually.

Over time, the output of the "golden triangle" has varied along with demand. Before 1949, the vast majority of products were firecrackers, whereas fireworks only accounted for a tiny percentage. In 1953, Liuyang and Liling began to export their products under the same trademark, but the partnership ended in 1965. Later, to meet the rising demand for fireworks in the international market, the cities shifted their focus from firecrackers to fireworks.

In recent years, targeting overseas markets, Liuyang has increased its firework proportion to 85 percent, whereas Pingxiang retains a conservative figure of 30 percent. Liling's firework production also far exceeds that of firecrackers. Despite a sharp contrast in product structure among the three cities, it has been widely acknowledged that fireworks – a high-end product with both technological requirements and high value added – has bright prospects.

Historically, Pingxiang, Liuyang, and Liling were already major producers of fireworks and firecrackers, but the role they played was not as notable as it is today. Their boom began when many of their competitors dropped out of the industry. For the sake of production security, government institutions at different levels promulgated a series of strict regulations, such as requiring plants to stay far from residential areas and for gunpowder to be loaded by a single worker in an isolated workshop. Still, frequent accidents plagued many traditional producers. In January 2010 alone, massive explosions occurred in firework plants in Shaanxi, Hunan, and Inner Mongolia, causing some local governments to shut them down. Beijing, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Liaoning all retreated from the industry one by one, paving the way for the rise of the "golden triangle" in China's fireworks and firecrackers industry.

The abandonment of the Chinese fireworks and firecrackers production in so many places evidences China's social progress. For more than 1,000 years, fireworks and firecrackers have been absolute necessities for celebration of important traditional festivals like Chinese New Year (Spring Festival). But along with the accelerated urbanization of recent decades, heavy pollution, injury, and property damage caused by gunpowder during each holiday have created controversy, criticism, and debate amongst the public.

How long will the Pingxiang-Liuyang-Liling fireworks producers remain robust? Locals aren't worried. Millennium-old customs die hard. The industry is lucrative, especially with expanding overseas markets. Today, Liuyang products illuminate skies at nearly every magnificent firework show in the world. The key is that humans love celebration, and in every culture nothing connotes exuberance better than a colorful explosion in the sky. As the industry insiders say, "A world without fireworks would be just too quiet and boring."

(Special thanks to Chinese National Geography magazine)

December 20, 2010: Amy Chua with her 18-year-old daughter Sophia Chua-Rubenfeld in their Connecticut home. CFP

Chinese Mothers vs. Tiger Mothers

Text by Yin Xing

On January 11th, 2011, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* by Chinese-American author Amy Chua hit shelves across America. Before it was published, an excerpt of the book titled *Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior* was published in *The Wall Street Journal*, sparking considerable debate and interest. Just one week after it was released, the book became Amazon's top-selling nonfiction title, arousing often heated discussions about Chinese and Western educational methods in the U.S. 'Tiger Mother' fever soon spread to Europe and Asia. In mid-January, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* entered markets of the U.K., Germany and China. In China, the book was reprinted four times in a single month with total sales of 50,000. During the Spring Festival holiday, it was the top parenting book on Dangdang and Joyo and joined the top 10 overall best-sellers.

Although it did not stir up national controversy like in the U.S., the book still gave rise to passionate debates on educational methods in China.

Tiger Mother ≠ Chinese Mother

In *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, Amy Chua mentioned "I'm using the term 'Chinese mother' loosely," and noted that she cannot speak for every Chinese mother. As matter of fact, Amy Chua indeed has a loose connection with China. She is the child of a first generation immigrant to the U.S. After living in the Philippines for many years, her father, Leon O. Chua, with Chinese Fujian roots, emigrated to the United States in the 1960s with a scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, eventually earning a Ph.D from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 1964.

June 8, 2010, Beijing: The last day of the national college entrance examination. Parents wait outside the exam venue with cameras to record the moment their children come out. CFP

Amy Chua's knowledge about Chinese educational methods all comes from her father, who was never satisfied with his daughter finishing second or receiving a grade lower than A. Of the four daughters in Chua's family, Amy is the eldest, so her father treated her most strictly. The only thing associated with China in Chua's memory is dumplings during Chinese New Year celebrations and spring rolls, a special flavor from Fujian Province. She can speak the Fujian dialect, but with a strong accent. Her only trip to China happened 10 years ago. Therefore, strictly speaking, Amy Chua cannot be tagged a "Chinese mother." More accurately, she is a mother who practices the educational mode of first generation immigrants, illustrated by her father's values. Most first generation immigrants to the U.S. from Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore as well as those from Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America endured hard lives at first, so they cherished bold aspirations while minimizing risk. This entire group is prone to educate their children with severity.

"Although Chua hails the virtues of 'the Chinese way,' the story she tells is quintessentially American," reports *The New York Times*. "It's the tale of a striving immigrant, determined to make a better life for himself and his family in a nation where such dreams are possible."

"I think Amy Chua employ the title 'Chinese mother' in order to draw more eyeballs," remarks Qi Lihua, an editor at China Pictorial Publishing House. "It's a commercial tactic. An American family with Chinese tough-teaching methods – they are no doubt the best selling points of the book."

Serving as music stands, parents help their children prepare for a violin competence test in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. CFP

Students studying for the national college entrance examination take a break, Zhengzhou, Henan Province. CFP

February 14th, 2011: Kids play with their foreign teacher. This kindergarten is the most expensive in Changsha City, Hunan Province – 7,000 yuan per month per child. CFP

Two 2-year-old children compete in swimming and shooting games. CFP

A≠Happiness

In the U.S., as soon as *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* was published, Chua received thousands of angry e-mails criticizing and even threatening her. "You're a monster"; "The way you raised your kids is outrageous"; "Where is the love, the acceptance?"… In the Chinese media, Chua once expressed a desire for Chinese people to understand her. Chua hoped to find backup in China, but the parents let her down. When her book arrived in Chinese bookstores, the name was changed to *I Am A Mother in the U.S.*, deflecting the aggressive image of a tiger mother because most Chinese mothers do not agree with her methods.

"I do not think her parenting methods are right," remarked Xu Ran, a Beijing mother. "Grade A is not equal to success. Chua just imposed her definition of happiness to her daughters. She was satisfying her own sense of achievement through her children."

In modern China, the first generation of the 'only child' has already become parents. They were brought up in a relatively prosperous China. And as the only child in the family, they were once burdened with the lofty expectations from their parents and obeyed strict rules. But when their turn came, things were different. "All I can remember about my childhood is study and memorization," recalls Zhang Ni, a doctor at a Beijing hospital. "I liked drawing from a young age, but my parents thought it unpromising and forced me to give it up. I have a decent job now, but I still regret abandoning my passion."

"The cub raised by a tiger mother is like a Spartan warrior who can win in the short term but won't find lasting victory," wrote Xu Jilin, a scholar at East China Normal University. "They could defeat Athens in the battlefield but failed to leave a lasting mark on human civilization. To this day, humans still enjoy the intellectual legacy of Athens. Civilization is the most durable and eternal power."

Compulsory Chinese Mother

Although most Chinese mothers consider the authoritarianism of Amy Chua improper, to some degree, they do practice some tiger mother methods. Actually, modern Chinese mothers face a paradox. They long for the free Western parenting methods, but must adapt to China's current situation. Chinese children do not have many alternatives if they fail to score high in school. If they cannot make a living by themselves, they are doomed to a pitiful life with few luxuries. So Chinese mothers are not born ruthless – their environment forces the tiger mother.

"I don't enjoy watching my daughter always studying so hard. But other than exhaustive study, what is the other way out?" asks Wang Ying, a mother from Dongguan City, Guangdong Province. "There are few employment opportunities. I'd like my kid to be Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg, but those two were both admitted to Harvard first." Her second-grade daughter takes three extracurricular classes: piano, dancing, and English. "I do not agree with Amy Chua's methods, but she makes some good points."

Most Chinese mothers try to balance Oriental and Western parenting methods in hopes that their children can excel in the Chinese educational system and develop creativity at the same time.

FIFTEEN MINUTES

Struggles of Overnight Grass-roots Sensations

Text by Yin Xing

February 2, 2011: A hip-hop dancing group of migrant workers from Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, at the Spring Festival Gala produced by China Central Television (CCTV).

When Justin Bieber's mother uploaded his videos to YouTube, she never expected her son to become such a global sensation. The internet facilitated the miracle. The phenomenon also happened to 23-year-old Ren Yueli, a rural girl from Hebei Province, China. At the age of 16, Ren reluctantly began working as a waitress in Beijing after dropping out of school. Hoping to make more money doing something for which she had passion, Ren quit waitressing and opted to try singing in a subway tunnel near Xidan, a busy commercial district in Beijing proper. At the beginning of 2009, a video of her performance taken by a passerby went viral on the internet and she quickly gained millions of fans and the nickname, "Xidan Girl." In 2011, she was invited to perform for the Spring Festival Gala produced by China Central Television (CCTV) — akin to turkey on Thanksgiving in the country. Over half the population of China watched her performance.

Ren Yueli, dubbed "Xidan Girl," plays in a subway tunnel near Xidan, a busy commercial district in Beijing proper before she got famous.

It brought overnight fame to Ren, who has now become a professional entertainer. Right after the gala, she announced she would auction off her guitar used in the event and donate the proceeds to charity. "I should pay back society," Ren remarked. And her endorsement rights will be sold in the same auction, with bidding starting at 1 million yuan. Zhao Xiaokai, general manager of the Beijing Calsky Auction Company, illustrated that several companies are planning to attend. Conservative estimates show that the price of "Xidan Girl" will reach 5 million yuan. As a street singer, Ren earned 1,000 yuan per month, half of which she sent to her family. The internet contributed to her fame, but at the time, her tight budget didn't include marketing herself online.

Li Tie, her agent, revealed that now Ren frequently participates in TV shows and various other entertainment programs, and media outlets are lining up for interviews, with over 40 still waiting. During the Chinese New Year holiday, she became a media star. "She saw as many as 10 organizations every day," Li recalls.

Her overnight fame generated both admiration and jealousy. Her voice once won wild acclaim from some, but was also attacked by others. "How can a girl singing in a Xidan subway tunnel be invited on stage at the CCTV Spring Festival Gala?" asked Ma Mei, a soprano with the China National Opera House. "Those who study music in professional schools for four or five years don't get this chance, nor do some veteran artists. Only through media exposure did a wandering singing girl become popular enough to play the CCTV Spring Festival Gala. She took a short-cut. I guess everybody should go sing at Xidan instead of going to school."

The same story happened to a singing duo consisting of two migrant workers: 44-year-old Wang Xu and 29-year-old Liu Gang. Before they were popular, both had performed a variety of jobs including farmer, builder, warehouse keeper and boiler worker. In August 2010, from their small rented house, the two unlikely stars performed an inspiring rendition of "In the Spring" – without shirts. When the video reached the internet, it was quickly clicked by millions. Their voices were dubbed "the most modest voices of migrant workers." They also received CCTV Spring Festival Gala invitations and gained great fame.

After they became more well-known, Wang and Liu were always surrounded by controversy. For starters, Wang Feng, the original singer of the iconic tune "In the Spring," prohibited the duo from singing his songs any more. Because they only cover Wang's songs, the ban suddenly muted them. Regulations related to royalties seemed too foreign for the pair of unrefined migrant workers. Then, their identities were questioned. Their popularity greatly benefited from their status as 'migrant workers,' much more than their broken voices and debatable guitar skill. They seemed like spiritual leaders for the 200 million migrant workers in China who finally had idols sharing their roots. To dispel any doubts, Liu's family provided his *hukou* (household registration) to reporters to certify his identity. To boot, descriptions of their experience as migrant workers proved to be substantially harrowing. As a result, after they became famous, the fact that the pair flew first-class aroused even more controversy… "Can migrant workers afford a first-class seat?"

In 1968, Andy Warhol prophesied that, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." In the internet era, those fleeting minutes seem more and more attainable. But what should these lucky souls do after their quarter hour expires? Ren and her peers are not well-educated. But this is just one of the many factors that put them in a precarious situation. The phenomenon is also connected with the current mindset of Chinese public. In China, the public are very sensitive about the 'tag' on any given person. The media tend to

February 2, 2011: Wang Xu and Liu Gang perform in Beijing at CCTV's Spring Festival Gala.

February 2, 2011: Ren Yueli, dubbed "Xidan Girl," performs in Beijing at CCTV's Spring Festival Gala, which was watched by half of China.

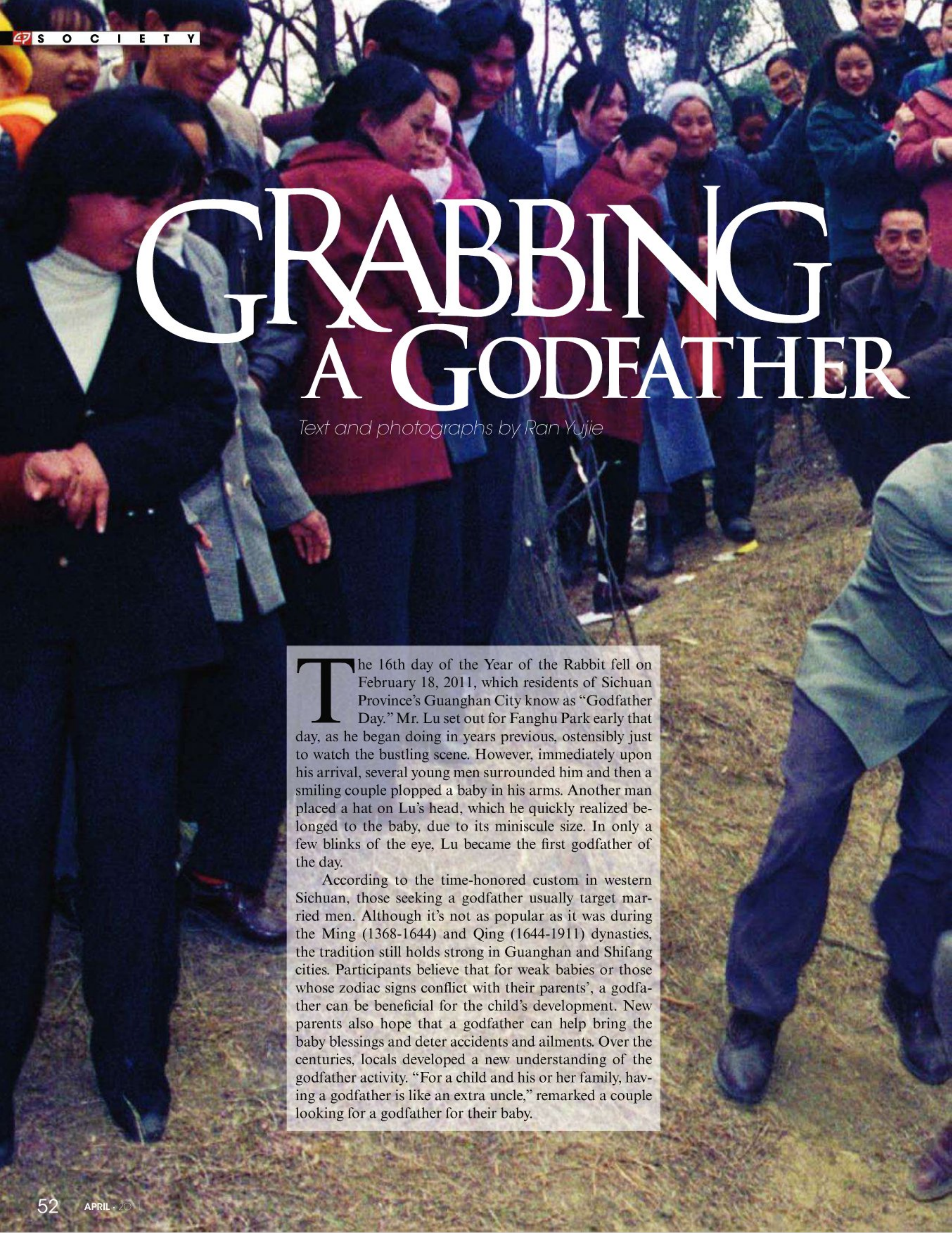
gravitate towards simplistic tags and labels like "children of the rich," "children of the leader," "the other woman," and "grass roots" to draw eyeballs. Grass-roots stars attract huge masses of fans. But after they become popular, these grass-roots stars can't help but evolve away from their former lives. Ren will never again sing in the subway tunnel, nor will Wang and Liu go back to farming. Fame and prosperity cause the figures to become sell-outs. As they move further from their roots, they inevitably lose their former tags as well as their supporters. Some fans even turn against them out of envy.

Also, before such grass-roots stars gain fame, fans can more easily forgive shortcomings in their performance, which in early stages serves as endearing evidence of their authenticity. When grass-roots stars start playing high-class venues and flying first class, their most ardent supporters lament the change. "We supported her not because of her skill but for the honesty and the innocence in her voice," remarked 'A Fu,' an internet fan of Ren. "And she was so in tune with the impossible road to our dreams. All this changed after she got famous. The angel has fallen into the world of the showbiz. The auction thing is perhaps just speculation." From this aspect, not only the stars themselves but also fans must adapt to the new situation.

The underdevelopment of Chinese show business is the other factor contributing to the situation. Oprah Winfrey, who grew from an ordinary girl to one of the world media's most powerful women and most famous personalities, owes much to the help of her strong back-up team. But in China, many agents only want to earn a quick buck without providing well-rounded services and career development for the entertainers. When a grass-roots star encounters a trust crisis, he lacks a specialized team to help him cope with the challenge.

But it is good to see that many grass-roots stars are remarkably quick learners. "For much of my life, I lingered at a crossroads," Ren wrote in her blog. "Sometimes I felt confused, but ultimately I chose to pursue my dream. I think it is an integral part of life." Wang and Liu have been given the green light from Wang Feng to begin their performing careers. Perhaps the next Justin Bieber will come from China.

January 1, 2011: Migrant workers surf the internet in a net bar at their factory. The spread of the internet helps everyone have access to potential overnight fame.

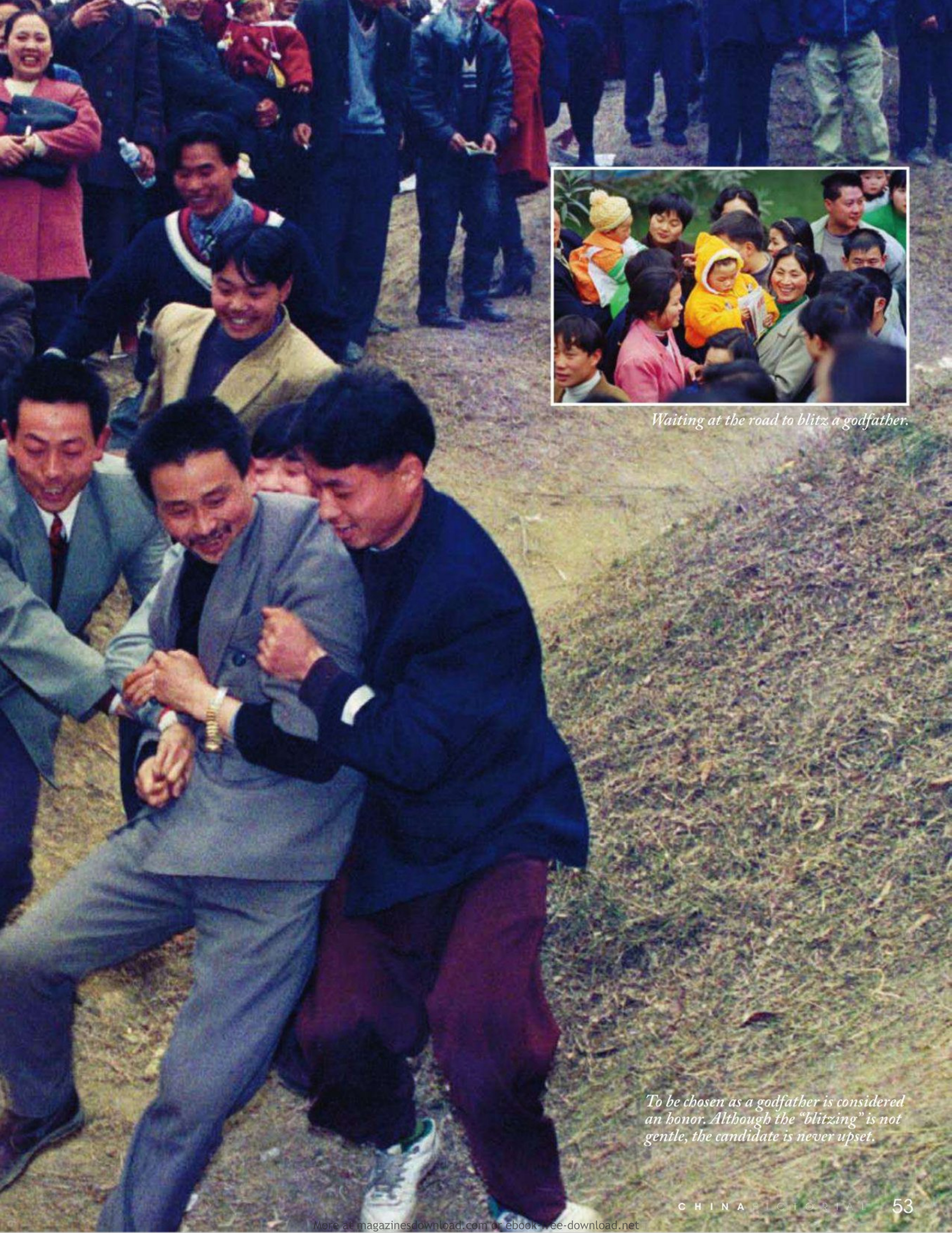


GRABBING A GODFATHER

Text and photographs by Ran Yujie

The 16th day of the Year of the Rabbit fell on February 18, 2011, which residents of Sichuan Province's Guanghan City know as "Godfather Day." Mr. Lu set out for Fanghu Park early that day, as he began doing in years previous, ostensibly just to watch the bustling scene. However, immediately upon his arrival, several young men surrounded him and then a smiling couple plopped a baby in his arms. Another man placed a hat on Lu's head, which he quickly realized belonged to the baby, due to its miniscule size. In only a few blinks of the eye, Lu became the first godfather of the day.

According to the time-honored custom in western Sichuan, those seeking a godfather usually target married men. Although it's not as popular as it was during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, the tradition still holds strong in Guanghan and Shifang cities. Participants believe that for weak babies or those whose zodiac signs conflict with their parents', a godfather can be beneficial for the child's development. New parents also hope that a godfather can help bring the baby blessings and deter accidents and ailments. Over the centuries, locals developed a new understanding of the godfather activity. "For a child and his or her family, having a godfather is like an extra uncle," remarked a couple looking for a godfather for their baby.



Waiting at the road to blitz a godfather.

To be chosen as a godfather is considered an honor. Although the "blitzing" is not gentle, the candidate is never upset.

A group of potential godfathers.

Reaching the target and seizing him!

Holding the child and wearing his hat is the typical image of a new godfather.

Buying insurance for their godsons and goddaughters.

In the late 1980s, the Guanghan government made "Godfather Day" an official annual festival. Since then, its themes and forms have undergone gradual changes. Elements such as burning incense, kowtowing, and fortune-telling have been abolished. And candidates for ideal godfathers are not limited to specific age range, profession, or social status. Interestingly, the choice to become a godfather is not made by the man himself. Parents choose based on appearance, temperament, or for no particular reason at all, and then "blitz" the man so there's little room for second thoughts.

Those visiting Splashing Festival should prepare to get wet, and tourists attending the Godfather Festival could possibly leave with a new godchild and their family. Not surprisingly, the new relationship is often awkward at first, but as time passes, all those involved become lifelong friends — making this festival a celebration of the inherent kindness of the human spirit as much as any other.

Although parents usually target married men, sometimes a woman can become a godmother.

The bustling "godfather" festival.

Away to Anhui

Text by Hu Yue
Photographs by Wan Quan

Wage growth and land cost inflation are prompting relocation of China's manufacturing juggernaut, a growth engine of the Chinese economy. Anhui Province in central China is one of the biggest beneficiaries.

On January 12, 2010, the State Council approved plans for the Wanjiang River Urban Belt to become an industrial transfer demonstration zone. The zone — covering nine cities along the Yangtze River in Anhui — accounts for 66 percent of the province's economy. Its ambitious goal was to double the GDP by 2015 from the 2008 level.

In the first 11 months of 2010, the zone received 401.2 billion yuan ($61.7 billion) of investments from outside the province, soaring 57.5 percent above one year earlier, said the Anhui Provincial Development and Reform Commission.

The inward spread of industry could provide a welcome buffer for the Chinese economy as massive stimulus tapers off and uncertainties gather over export prospects. Since eastern coastal regions are losing steam after years of turbo-charged growth, the take-off of the central areas is considered an important stimulus.

"This is an overwhelming process that is going to re-

Well-illuminated Swan Lake is a crown night attraction of the New Cultural District in Hefei, provincial capital of Anhui.

CENTRAL CHINA'S ANHUI PROVINCE BECOMES A MAJOR DESTINATION FOR INDUSTRY AS COMPANIES MOVE THEIR PRODUCTION LINES INLAND.

shape the economic geography of China," said Li Yang, Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "The possibility of central China taking the baton of development from the maturing eastern provinces is clearly good news for the Chinese economy."

"With a solid industrial foundation, Anhui has deep potential to become a significant component of China's manufacturing machine," he said.

"We have learned from experience in the east coastal provinces and are determined to reject energy-guzzling and highly polluting enterprises," said Wang Sanyun, Governor of Anhui Province.

"Moreover, it is necessary to encourage technological innovation and enhance value creation during the transfer process," he said.

The zone puts priority on a few key sectors: equipment manufacturing, hi-tech and modern services, said Shen Weiguo, director of the Anhui Provincial Development and Reform Commission.

"Efforts are also being made to improve infrastructure and public services to accommodate large-scale industrial transfers," Shen said. "We aim to foster several globally competitive giants and world-renowned brands."

Inside the Chao Yuan Precision Electronic Technology Co., Ltd., based in Tongling, Anhui.

Moving Inland

Riding the wave of industrial transfer was the Shanghai Huayi Group, which in October 2008 joined hands with partners to build a coal chemical plant in Chaohu, Anhui.

"We investigated many other places like Ningbo and Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province and Qinhuangdao of Hebei Province," said Hu Guowei, general manager of the plant. "But eventually we chose Anhui because of its proximity to Shanghai and rich coal resources."

After beginning operation in November 2011, the plant is expected to generate sales revenues of 50 billion yuan (US$7.7 billion) annually, he said.

But what really set the company apart from its counterparts was a deep-rooted commitment to striking a balance between environment and production. Ashes left over from coal burning are used to make bricks and other construction materials, while wastewater is also purified for recirculation. In addition, all coal is required to go through desulphurization before burning to protect the environment and minimize damage to metal equipment.

"The recycling model offers insurance on operational efficiency and brightens our outlook for future growth," said Hu.

Another example is the Zhejiang Hailiang Co. Ltd. that invested 1.5 billion yuan ($230.8 million) in late 2010 to build a factory for air conditioner copper tubes in Tongling, dubbed the copper capital of China. Prior to that, the private company owned three copper processing plants in Zhejiang, Shanghai and Vietnam, respectively, relying on the overseas markets for more than 70 percent of sales.

"But due to the global financial crisis, our exports received a heavy blow," remarked Fu Lingzhong, general manager of the factory. "Protectionism restrictions also made a dent in the export businesses."

In October 2010, the United States slapped anti-dumping duties on copper tubes imported from China, hoping to protect domestic producers.

"That is why we decided to switch to thriving domestic markets," Fu said. "Now the company supplies copper tubes to Gree and Midea, China's top air conditioner manufacturers.

Relatively low labor and freight costs have provided a solid floor under the company's profitability, cushioning the impact of copper price surges, Fu noted.

"The new plant is expected to account for almost half of Hailiang's sales in 2011," he revealed.

Driving Force

The list of Anhui's advantages is long — geographic location as a link between east and west China, proximity to natural resources, and better transport networks. The Yangtze River facilitates its cargo transport to downstream cities. A high-speed railway came into operation in 2008, shortening travel time between the provincial capital Hefei and Shanghai to barely three hours from eight.

The new rail lines will accelerate the "catch-up" that central China is playing with the east, said Ha Jiming, managing director of Goldman Sachs Group's investment banking division. "It is creating a virtuous cycle. Relocation of companies creates new job opportunities and that will also encourage an increase in consumption."

Meanwhile, local governments have handed out a string of generous incentives, including favorable land policies, tax waivers, and financial support.

Market forces are also putting cities in central China under the spotlight. The south and east coastal areas are losing some ground as land and labor costs creep up. The resource strains and environmental degradation adds urgency to the move away from the coast.

The monthly minimum wage in Anhui is 720 yuan ($110.8), compared with 1,120 yuan ($172.3) in Shanghai. It is estimated that industrial production costs in the province are 30-40 percent lower than in east coastal regions.

An expanding market is also luring investors. With deeper pockets, Anhui's consumers are ready to spend. Retail sales of the province totaled 415.2 billion yuan ($63.9 billion) in 2010, surging 19.2 percent year on year, the third fastest rate across the nation.

Wal-mart, the world's largest retailer, plans to open three more stores in Hefei this year as it makes a push into the burgeoning consumer market. UPS, a global shipping leader, in October 2010 put a new shared-service center into operation in Hefei, its largest in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Delivery demands are burning hot in Anhui where smaller businesses are increasingly merging into the global industrial chain," said Christopher Grubb, Vice President of UPS Asia Pacific Region. "The favorable policy environment here also appealed to us."

The thriving local economy is also luring migrant workers back home. In the past three decades, the province provided millions of migrant workers to factories of the coastal regions. But now the dynamics are changing.

Migrant workers in Anhui totaled around 17 million in 2010, more than 20 percent of whom have returned to work within the province, as more job opportunities are brought to their front doors, said the Department of Human Resources and Social Security of Anhui Province.

Among these workers is 26-year-old Hu Peiman, who in 2007 found his first job in a textile factory in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. But last year he returned to Anhui and now works on the quality control line of an electronics company in Hefei.

"I now earn a little less than in Shenzhen," said Hu. "But the living costs here, especially house prices, are much lower, and it is also easier for me to take care of my family."

"The labor inflow will also inject fresh steam into other aspects of the local economy like consumption and the services sector," said Lu Zhongyuan, vice president of the Development Research Center under the State Council. "But it is necessary to strengthen job training for returning migrant workers and give support to their job-hunting efforts."

Anhui is blessed with diverse tourist resources, including world-famous scenic sites within the Wanjiang River Urban Belt. The mountain pictured is Mt. Jiuhua, a Buddhist shrine.

Lu noted that Anhui still has a long way to go to improve its business environment.

"There is a growing need to stimulate the logistics industry and provide efficient connections between each link of the industrial supply chain," he said.

Right now, it is estimated that logistics costs in Anhui account for 31.2 percent of its GDP, compared with around 15 percent in the Yangtze River Delta region.

"Meanwhile, efforts are still needed to strengthen the industrial chain," he said. "Some manufacturing giants are reluctant to move in due to a lack of local parts suppliers."

An animation production firm based in Anhui's Chizhou Economic and Technological Development Zone.

An exhibition of products depicting popular animated images.

Commercial Heritage

Text by Zhao Yue

Xi'an first became the capital of China during the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 1100-771BC), and it has held a prominent position in Chinese history for more than 3,000 years. A historical mecca even then, today's Xi'an has evolved into a natural museum with unparalleled historical artifacts. Downtown are ruins from the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, in the northwest are ruins from the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD), and tombs of the Han emperors can be found in the city's eastern and southern ends.

Visiting the Shaanxi History Museum.

Cultural Heritage

As the capital of both the Han and Tang dynasties, two notably vibrant eras of ancient China, Xi'an left behind many treasures. In terms of cultural relics, the city boasts an advantage even greater than its own contributions: items from all over the country were gathered in Xi'an. While the city served as the capital of China for so long, feudal etiquette dictated that the most exquisite items each region had to offer ended up with the emperor in his court. Therefore, the relics unearthed in the city not only reveal history of Xi'an, but rather the whole nation. In fact, it's easier to find items typical of the Han and Tang dynasties than one indigenous to Xi'an.

The city is home to two of the most famous public museums in the country: Emperor Qin Shihuang's Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses Museum and the Shaanxi History Museum. The former, displaying a stunning mass of clay statues, was once called the eighth wonder of the world, while the latter is considered the most prestigious of its kind. The Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses Museum functions like a private enterprise, requiring an entrance fee while surrounded by commercial projects, but the Shaanxi History Museum keeps a more public image and welcomes visitors free of charge.

Presently, Xi'an is preparing to implement its "Rejuvenation of Imperial City of the Tang Dynasty" over the next five decades in hopes of reclaiming its millennium-old capital glamour. To achieve this goal, along with efforts related to infrastructure construction, city management upgrades, and cultural exchange, Xi'an relies heavily on its numerous cultural relics, from bronze ware, Tang tri-coloured glazed pottery, jade, porcelain, paintings, to calligraphy – living documentation of Xi'an's history and values.

Protection of Cultural Relics

Protecting its abundant cultural relics is no easy task. "Cultural heritage protection always conflicts with urban construction and development, especially in a city like Xi'an," explains Zhou Kuiying, director of Historic Preservation Department, Shaanxi Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage. "Nowadays in Xi'an, within the city wall lie underground ruins of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, while outside the wall are underground ruins of the Sui and Tang dynasties." In such a situation, governmental cultural protection is neither sufficient nor realistic. In came private funds – a new method of cultural relic protection was born in Xi'an, with the Tang West Market as a model example.

It's easy to underestimate the importance of the ancient street, but it's the nation's only project rebuilt on its original historical site. In the Tang Dynasty, when Xi'an was called Chang'an, the West Market served as one of the capital's two major trading venues. Catering to local residents and foreign merchants, the market covered an area of 106 hectares and housed more than 40,000 shops. In 2005, the site was targeted by a commercial real estate project and developed by a private enterprise. During construction, relics of the ancient market were unearthed which halted the digging. After archeological research and exploration, a new design for the area was developed: The new West Market would focus on culture and relics preservation, highlighted by a huge museum constructed on the site.

On April 7, 2010, the Tang West Market Museum opened to the public, becoming the first museum of its kind in China – created with private funds. A theme museum exhibiting the commerce during the prosperous Tang Dynasty, Silk Road culture, and the history of Xi'an, it features glass floor enabling display of ancient crossroads, stone bridges, and drains in their original locations. Also, the museum features shops of a similar style to the Tang Dynasty. Tourists can enjoy the exhibitions and performances while buying gifts.

Visitors study the city map of Tang Dynasty Xi'an at the Shaanxi History Museum.

Coins dating from the early Eighth Century were unearthed from the site of the Tang West Market.

Bustling West Market.

More Thoughts

Wang Bin, curator of the Tang West Market Museum, served as deputy curator for the Shaanxi History Museum for eight years. She believes that it will be difficult for a museum to survive on only funds from private enterprises and without support from government. When considering a museum's public function, the cultural industry must also be taken into consideration. To some extent, the West Market project is unique for its ability to cover some of the cultural protection expense with developer's profits from residential programs and hotels included in the project.

However, for future private cultural protection programs, a lack of methods to secure sufficient funds is a major concern. A balance must be found in the relationship between commercial development and public protection if privately-run projects are to continue.

Actually, the conflict between cultural protection

Bronze chariot and horses, unearthed in Xi'an.

and commercial development has existed for a long time. These days, news of cultural relics being destroyed during commercial development are common in the media, such as the site of grain warehouses of the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties, one of China's top ten 2009 archeological finds, and the 1,000-year-old Shijia Temple in Sixian County of Anhui Province. "Sometimes, we are battling bulldozers for cultural relics," laments Shan Jixiang, head of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage.

As for the Tang West Market project, some have expressed doubt as to the best method to protect cultural heritage while maintaining commercial profits. One expert, who asked not to be named, expressed the issue succinctly: "Businesses need to earn money, but cultural protection drains a great deal of money." Although pessimistic, he hopes a successful protection-development strategy emerges. "At least they're courageously trying to develop something that will work."

Honor guard painted pottery displayed at the Shaanxi History Museum.

生活用器 实用巧思
Exquisite Daily Utensils

A patron at the Tang West Market Museum.

Art collection has attracted interest from private Chinese investors in recent years. by Li Hao

Colorful clay sculptures exhibited in a hall of the Tang West Market devoted to intangible cultural heritage.

Ship on a Hill

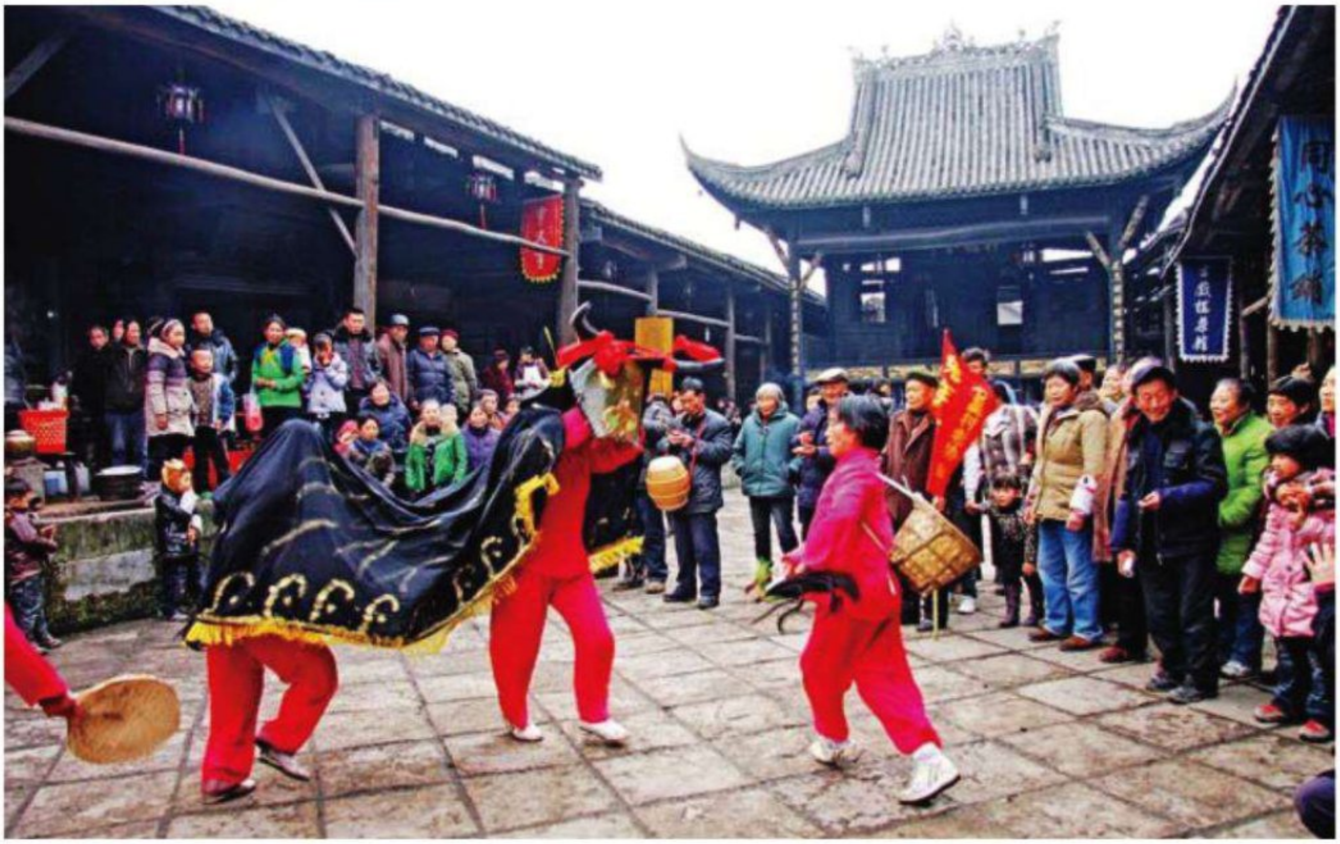
Far from the ocean, deep inside China's landlocked province of Sichuan lies Luocheng, an ancient town strikingly resembling a giant ship.

A typical scene in the ancient town.

Legend goes that during the reign of Emperor Chongzhen (1627-1644) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), a geomantic master named Zhang occasionally visited Luocheng. In a local teahouse, he witnessed many locals sigh with despair. Surprised, he asked an old man at the next table what was troubling them so much. "Our town suffers a severe water shortage," the old man groaned. Master Zhang pondered the problem a while and eventually proposed a solution: Reconstructing the town after the shape of a vessel. Then, local residents elected Zhang as the leader of the reconstruction project. Within three years, Zhang led hundreds of artisans to dismantle the old district and build the new town with a boat-shaped layout. On the day of its completion, locals gathered to climb a nearby mountain overlooking the new Luocheng, which appeared just like an enormous ship sailing on the sea, hence its nickname "ship on a hill."

Taking a stroll through the ancient town feels like a trip to China 300 years ago. Built in 1628, Luocheng sits on the elliptical top of a hill about 200 kilometers from Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. Its main street appears like the hull, buildings on both sides like the rails, while the theater in the center serves as the cabin, Lingguan Temple in the east as the tail roofing, and the stone pillar in the west as bow.

Luocheng preserves a 200-meter-long street lined with traditional buildings with portico arcades, which are designed with the region's often rainy and hot weather in mind – aiming to protect pedestrians from sunshine and rain. Now, the street has become an integral part of local life. Whether street vendors are out or not, the street is always crowded with people: Some drink tea and play



Distinctive folk customs attract tourists from near and far.

The ancient structure has survived the test of time.

poker, some have dinner, some hawk products and others just sit and chat.

The area around Luocheng abounds in minerals such as coal, salt, and iron ore, which attract traders from hundreds of kilometers away. The town has become a bustling distribution center. However, in the past, the town was an even more dynamic commercial hub. Every year, numerous merchants came to purchase cargo and transport them elsewhere on horseback. With prosperous commerce and an increase in population, the town bloomed with religion, guilds, and folk culture. Historically, there were a dozen temples dedicated to deities of different religions, as well as five guildhalls established by Guangxi, Guangdong, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Sichuan merchants, respectively. However, every guildhall was destroyed, leaving only a pair of exquisitely-carved stone lions at the entrance to Nanhua Palace. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Luocheng became a habitat of the Hui people. Today, the town still preserves a magnificent mosque, which serves as a venue for local and surrounding Hui to hold religious rituals. The mosque features lush *phoebe nanmu* trees, exquisite buildings, gorgeous decorations, and a tranquil environment.

During festivals and holidays, farmers from nearby villages venture into town to trade agricultural products and items such as homemade bamboo, wooden furniture, daily necessities, or production tools. On the night of the temple fair, the town glows with colorful lanterns representing locals' hopes and dreams. After surveying the town several times, Australian architects built a China Travel Town in Melbourne, modeled after Luocheng's boat-shaped street.

Tips

The ancient town of Luocheng features a mild climate and distinctive seasons. Summer is the rainy season, so those hoping to stay dry should visit in other seasons.

Tourists can take a bus from Chengdu to Leshan, where many buses service Luocheng. In addition, several tour buses depart Shiyangchang Bus Station in southern suburban Chengdu for Luocheng every day.

There are many snacks that tourists should try, especially various kinds of local beef.

A Roving Residence

Text and photographs by Fan Jing

As an indigenous poem more eloquently describes, Kazakhs living in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region move more frequently that anyone else on earth. Their history has been recorded on the move and their lives are enriched by the perpetual migration.

As the seasons change every year over the vast grasslands of Tekes County, Ili Kazakhstan Autonomous Prefecture, it is not uncommon to see families herding flocks of animals such as sheep, cattle, horses, and camels while carrying their belongings on their backs, stopping only to erect yurts at places with water and fields at higher elevations.

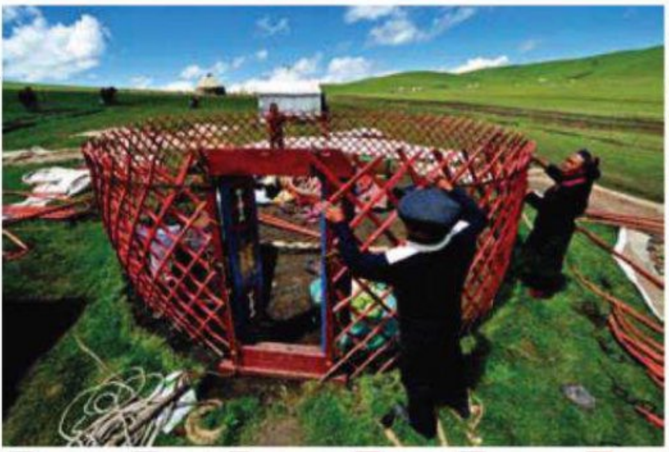
Yurts are constructed by hand, size depending on family members and money in their pockets. Size usually varies along with the number of walls, which is often four, six, or eight. Some simple, tiny, temporary yurts even lack any walls. The most common designs feature four walls.

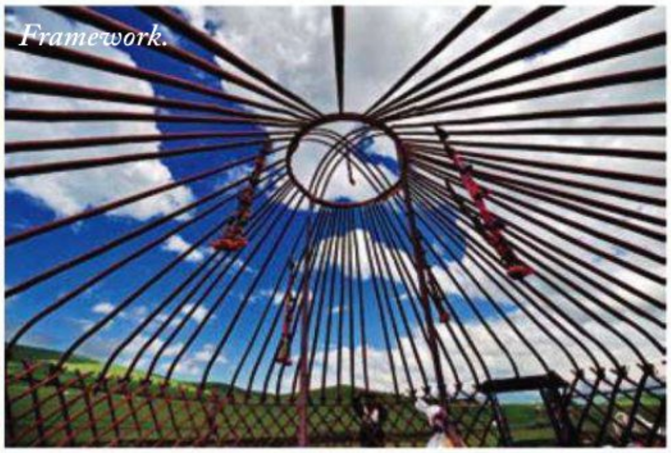
Building materials primarily come from the grassland. For example, poles supporting the roof come from rose willows of the Gobi, and straw mats composing the walls and curtains are made of achnatherum, a kind of grass. The lower interior walls are decorated with brightly-patterned braided fabric in a rainbow of colors, bringing vigor and vitality to the dwelling.

Collecting material and weaving the yurt requires painstaking efforts and thousands of achnatherum. Milky felt rugs that keep the yurt warm in winter and cool in summer are composed mostly of wool and constructed by Kazakh women. The roof is usually a colorful felt rug in the shape of a crescent moon, decorated with gorgeous patterns, ideal as the last visuals before inhabitants drift off to sleep.

Letting in fresh air and sunlight.

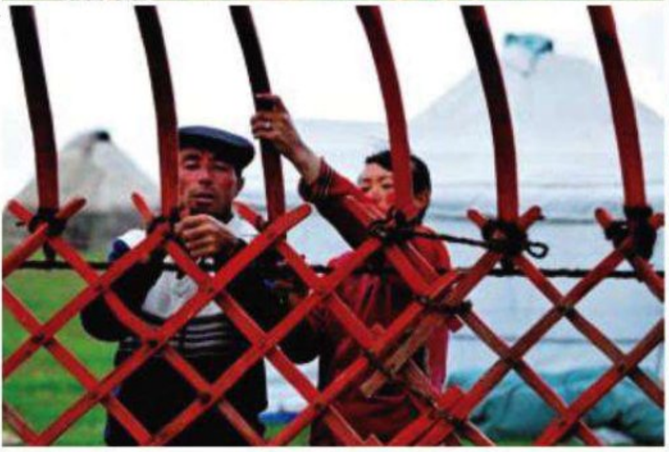
Measuring about 1.6 meters in height, the walls of the yurt are woven with rose willow.

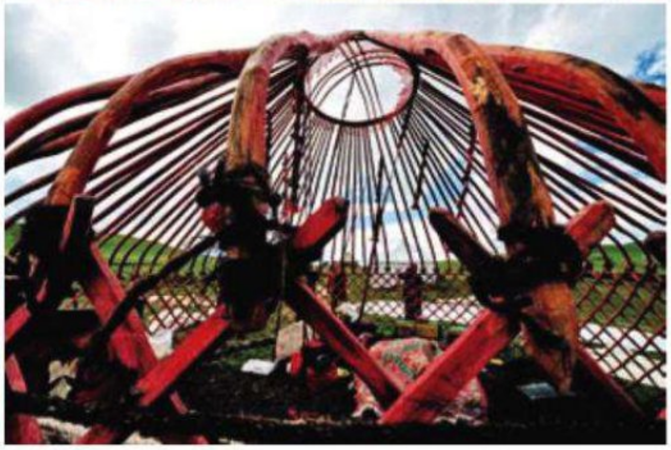




Framework.

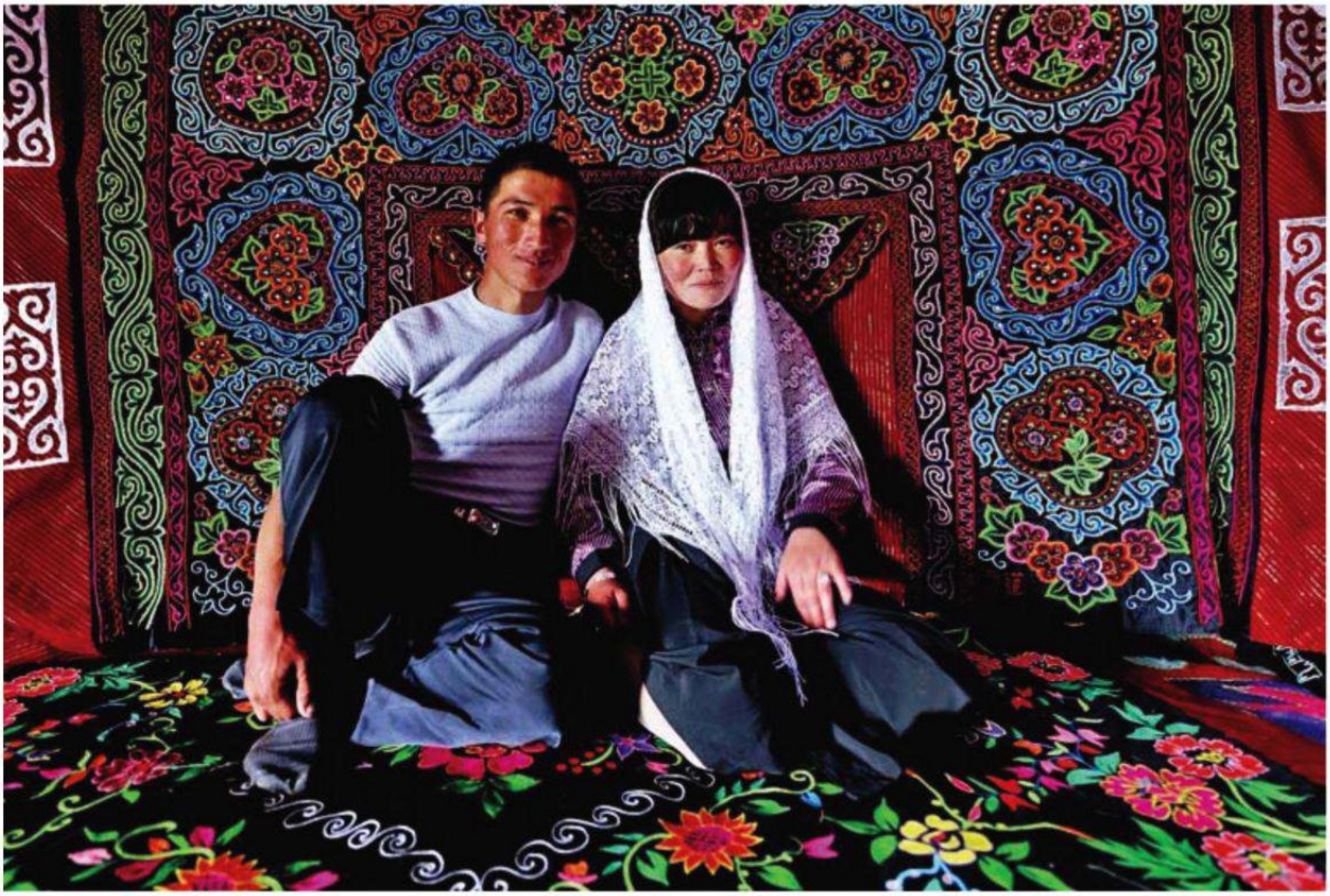
The walls and roof are joined with wool thread for convenient removal when moving.





No metal is used in the entire structure.

Known as a horseback people, Kazakhs also love dogs.



A wedding.

The door plank is usually painted red and accented with simple patterns around the rim. The door is built as small as possible in hopes of keeping the home warm during fierce wind and severe cold of the winter months. A threshold under the door allows it to be opened easily even when snow piles up, and it usually faces southeast to avoid wind from the north. The frame, shaped like a Kazakh man's hat, is supported by 66 poles connected with a copious amount of fine, soft, woolen thread. Nary can a nail or piece of metal be found.

The frame itself is a work of art characterized by succinct, elegant lines. Each piece, from the wood to thread, plays its role subtly. The frame is wrapped with thick, felt wool and decorated with pretty tapestries, creating a warm, inviting atmosphere.

Every morning when the sun peeks over the hills, Kazakh women open the roof to let in fresh air and sunlight. The grandmother lights a cigarette and smokes quietly, perhaps reminiscing about the good old days. Kids wash down pancakes with milk tea. Men like to play the Dombra (a plucked string instrument) and sing folk songs. Women prepare lamp chops and Mansaf (mutton with rice).

The traditional dwelling can still be found on the grassland, but as times change, increasing numbers of youngsters choose to join the modern world where society is more open. Kids are often sent to town or cities to study, and they become familiar with high-rises and brick houses roofed with tile. Modernization is not only a dilemma for Kazakhs, as others too hope that yurts do not only survive in memories or museums.

Entertaining guests at a wedding.

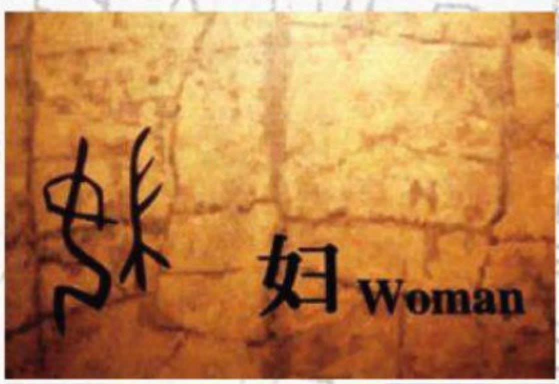
A Place with Characters

Text and photographs by Wang Lei and Chen Jian

Tradition holds that Chinese characters were created by a person named Cang Jie. It goes without saying that written language plays a crucial role in the preservation of heritage and forward development of human civilization.

With an eye on cherishing the history and culture of written Chinese, a museum devoted to Chinese characters was established in Anyang, Henan Province, central China.

National Museum of Chinese Writing in Anyang, Henan Province.



"Woman" in ancient pictograph, modern Chinese script and English.

Characters carved on a tortoise shell.

Inscription etched on a stone plate.

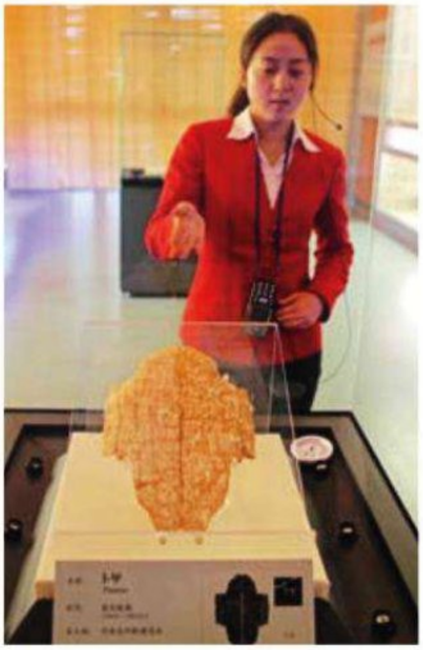
Writing on bamboo strips.

Henan Province has long been considered one of the cradles of Chinese civilization. It served as capital for 20 regimes. Anyang was chosen for the site of the museum because the nearby Yin Ruins provided the oldest known written Chinese – carvings on oracle bones dating to the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600-1100 B.C.). The ruins yielded numerous relics dating back about 1,300 years and became a World Cultural Heritage site in 2006.

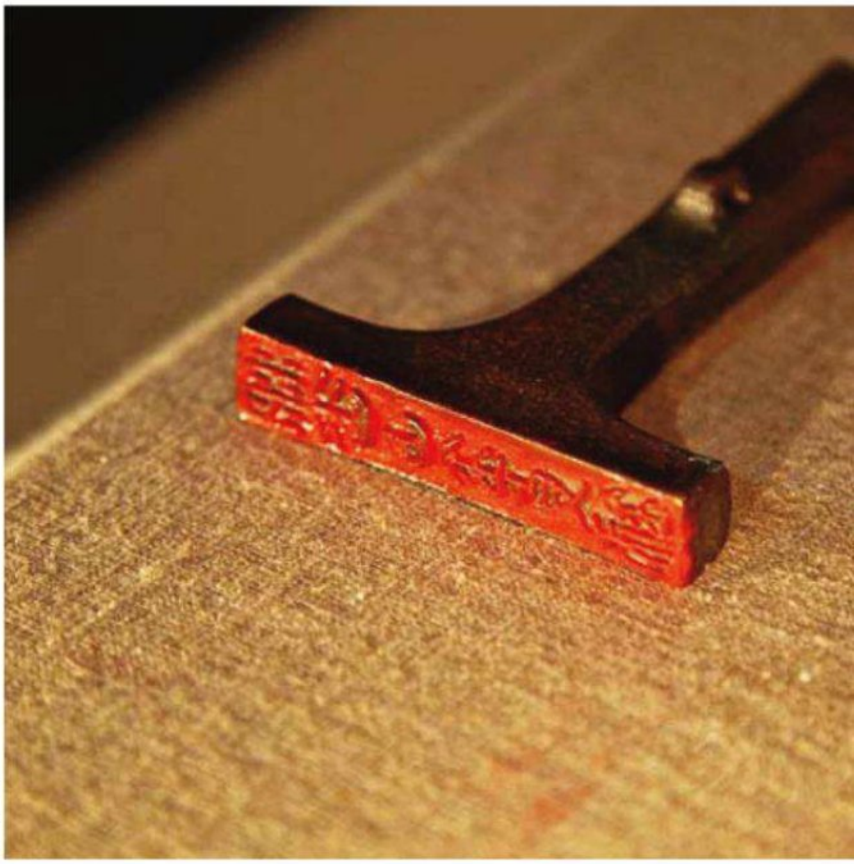
Inspired by the campaign to apply for World Cultural Heritage status, in 2001 the municipal government of Anyang began planning a museum devoted to written Chinese after items from the Yin Ruins shed more light on its fascinating history. They hoped that such a museum would ideally showcase the origins and development of Chinese culture as well as the written word's profound influence on the development of the nation.

Located on the eastern end of Renmin (People's) Avenue, the National Museum of Chinese Writing includes several buildings of both modern and traditional Chinese styles, namely Cang Jie Hall, the Hall of Popular Science, the Research Center, and the Cultural Exchange Center. The institution specializes not only in the history of standard Chinese characters, but also focuses on the many various scripts of ethnic groups throughout China. Elite samples on display illustrate how Chinese characters originated and developed into modern usage.

The structures, together resembling the Chinese pictograph "墉" (meaning "fortified wall"), were designed by Professor Yang Hongxun, president of the Architectural History Sub-Institute of the Architectural Society of China and a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Accord-



Relating the stories of Chinese characters.



Chinese characters carved in seals have become integral to Chinese cultural art.

3,000-year-old bronze ware engraved with Chinese characters.

ing to Yang, the design fuses several post-modern elements with typical traditional Chinese shapes.

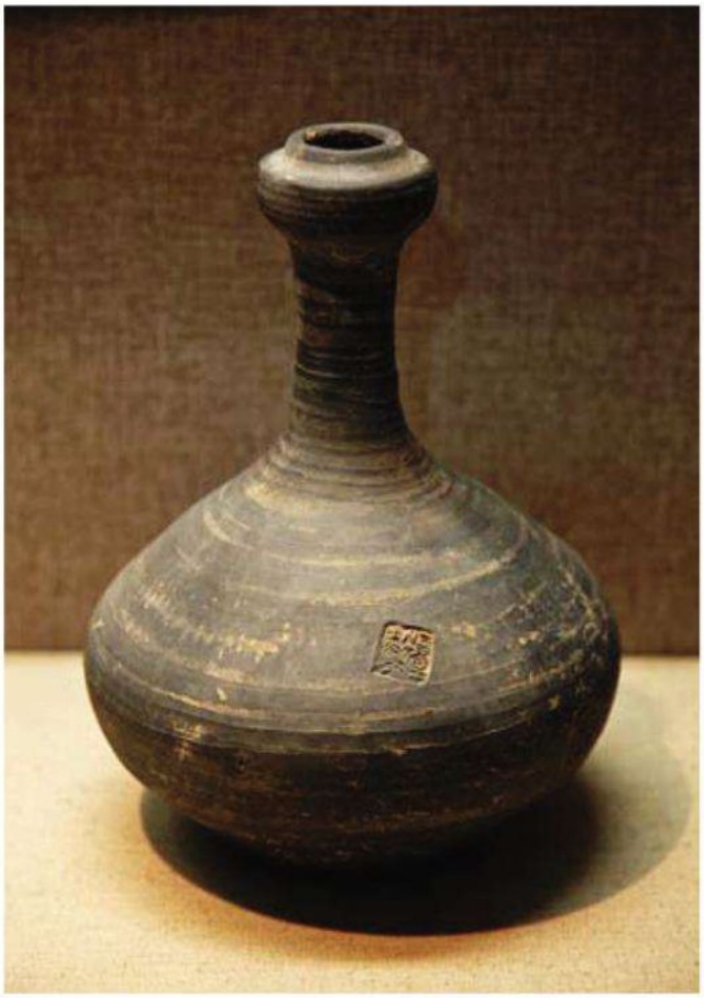
Exhibitions can be divided into several stages. The first leg depicts origins, development, and evolution of Chinese characters; the second part shows written languages of Chinese minority groups; and the third section is devoted to the art of printing and Chinese characters in the information age.

Additionally, the museum frequently creates special displays for singular subjects as well as temporary exhibits. Special subjects mostly feature strong local flavor, such as the oracle bones and Anyang. Current temporary exhibits feature calligraphic collections from the Palace Museum (Forbidden City) and elite relics of Tibetan handwriting from the Cultural Palace of the Nationalities, both on loan from Beijing.

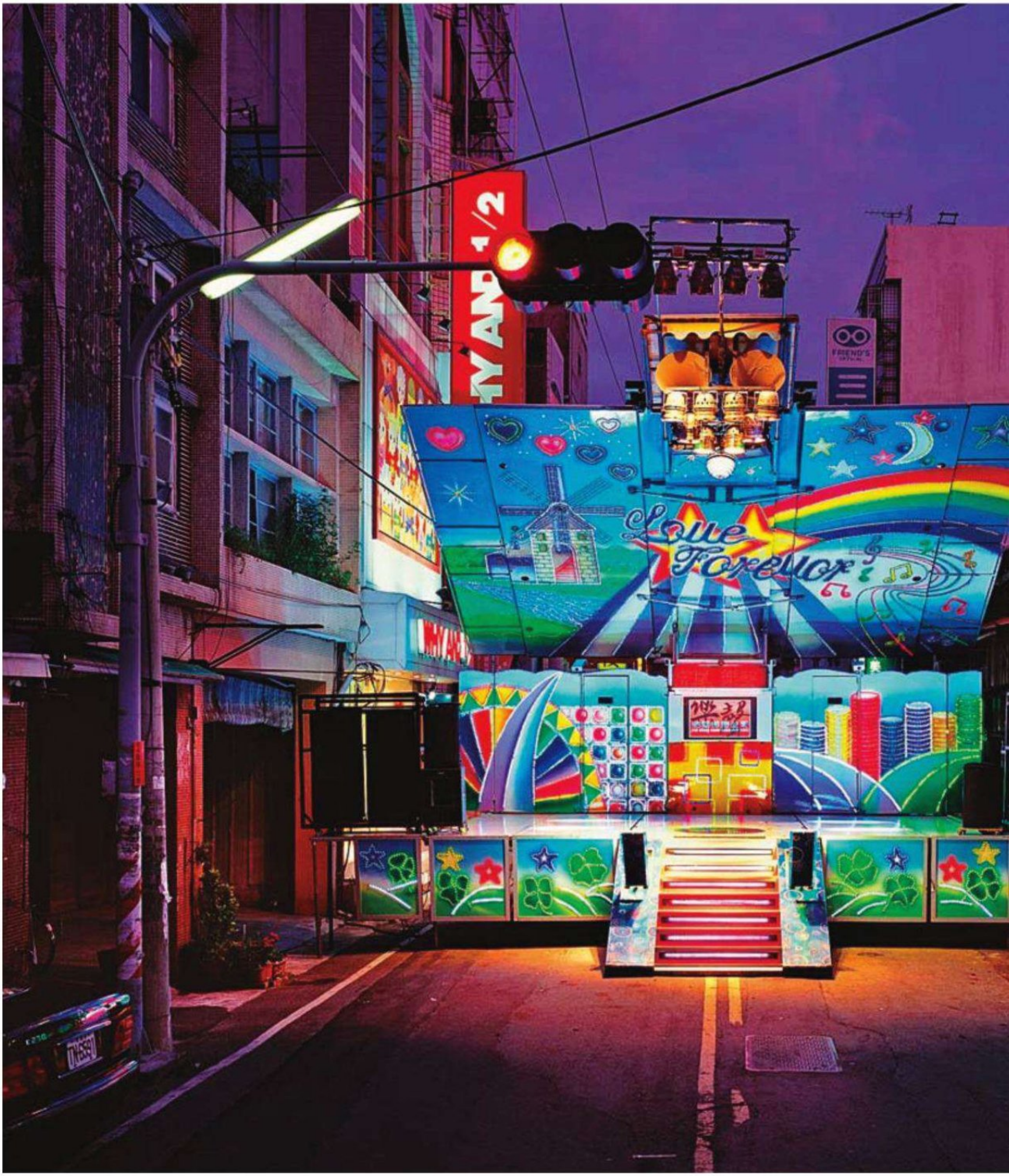
The museum certainly serves its intended function – to popularize, encourage study, and sponsor international cultural exchange of the Chinese written language.

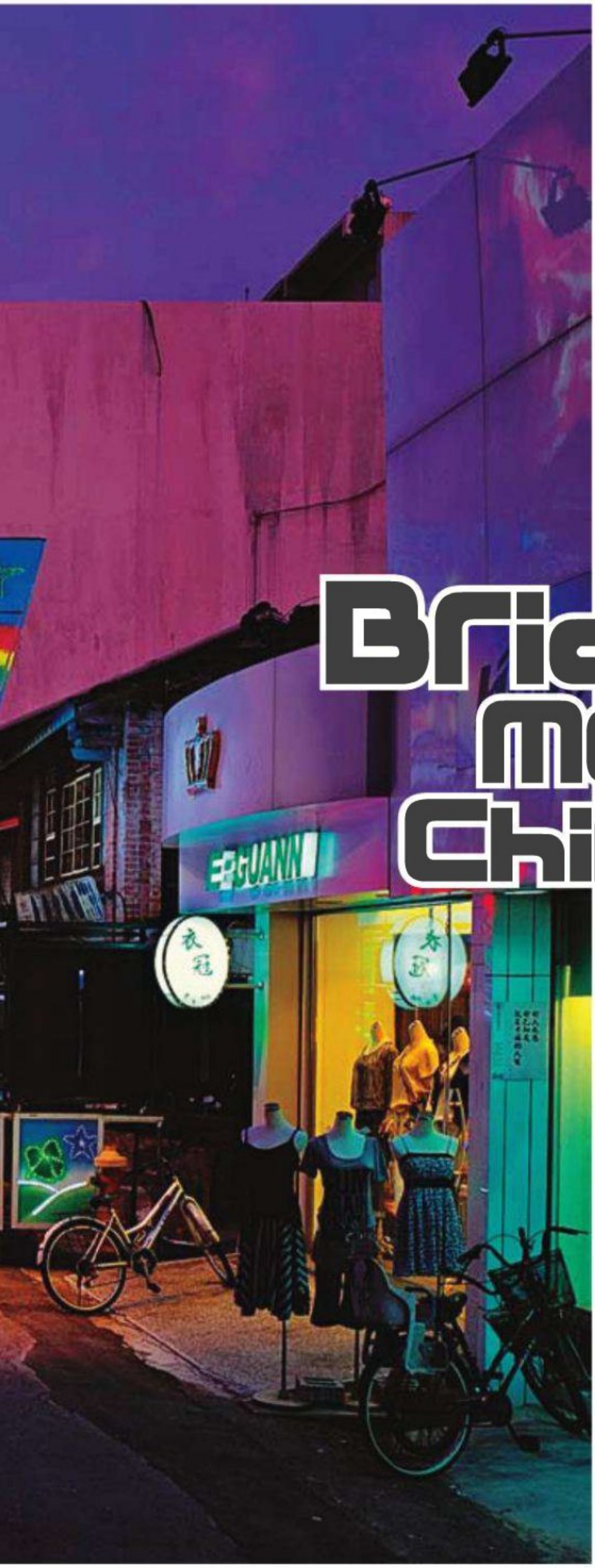
Showcasing the process of papermaking in ancient China.

Bamboo strips carried Chinese handwriting before the invention of paper.



Script on pottery.


Love Forever!
1/2
FRIEND'S



Stage Series, *by Shen Zhao-liang, audio-visual installation*

"What's the definition of 'modern art' anyway?" For the many who remain confused with art's often subtly defined genres, light can be shed with a visit to the National Art Museum of China in Beijing, where the works of 12 modern masters from Taiwan and China's mainland are on display from March 7 through April 15, 2011.

The exhibition, *A Contemporary Art Exhibition Across the Straits 2011,* features 24 series of the artists' latest work, embodying the characteristics of modern Chinese art with themes of "Flourishing and Flowing," intending to illustrate the relationship between the language and concepts of the arts.

Bridges of Modern Chinese Art

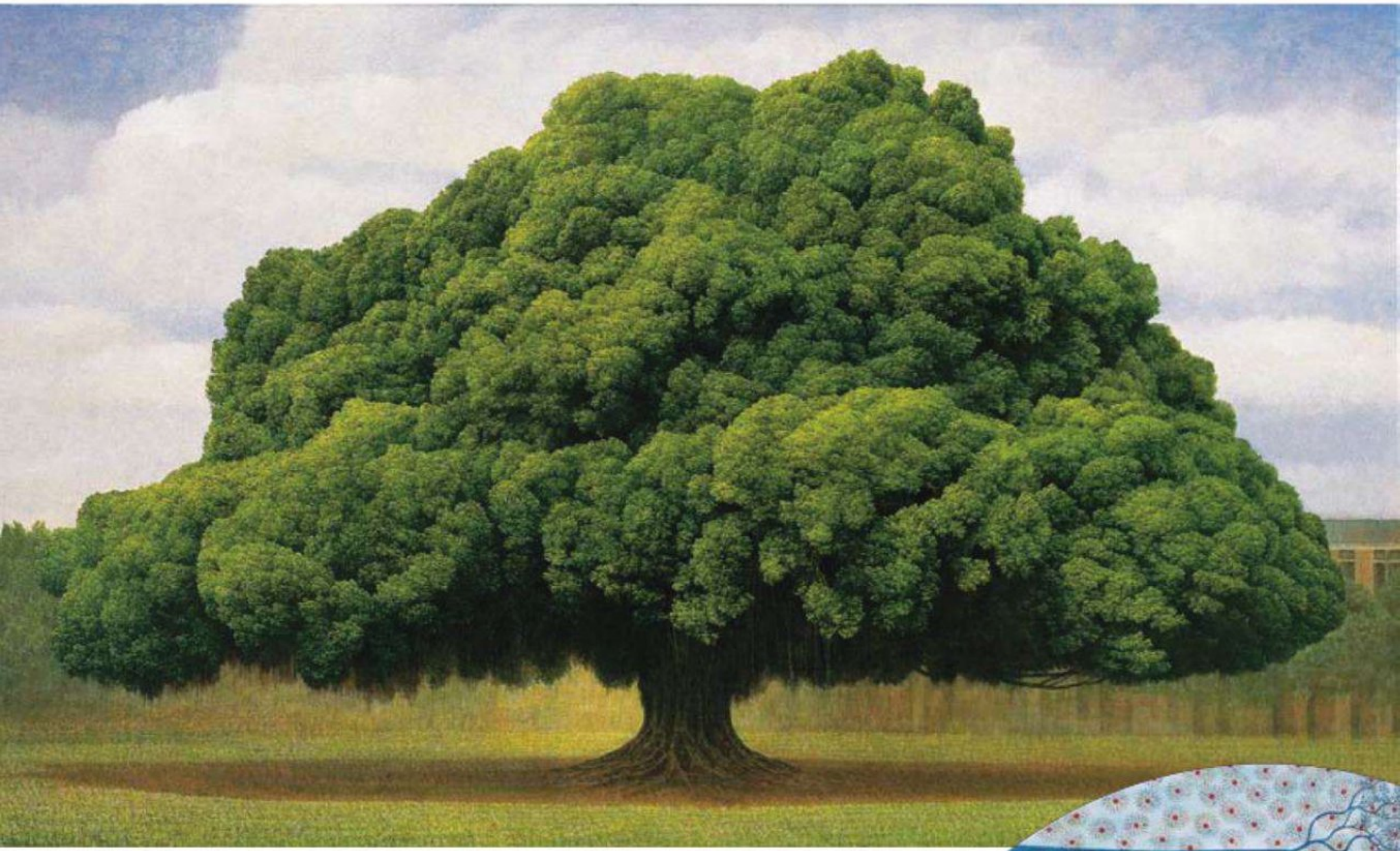
Text by Wang Shijie

"Flourishing" describes the sensory experience that characterizes the richness and complexity of modern art – expressed through multi-media and languages beyond traditional visual means. Many artists today express their feelings and thoughts through mixed media and a variety of carriers; one single tongue is no longer good enough to convey their daedalian ideas. As a result, new expressions have been developed to link trans-boundary fragments within a single piece of art, saving space for those who come to enjoy.

"Flowing" is a new stage of modern art stuffed with unprecedented ideas and cutting-edge fusions. It breaks the tranquility of traditional art, establishing a new reference point for pieces which were previously difficult to define and categorize.

As they sensitively present miscellaneous snapshots of modern life, modern artists strive to transcend realistic limits through artistic concepts and language.

With these themes, the exhibition examines how fast and complicated lives have become along with the dramatic progress on our planet in every sector – particularly society, economy, culture, and technology.

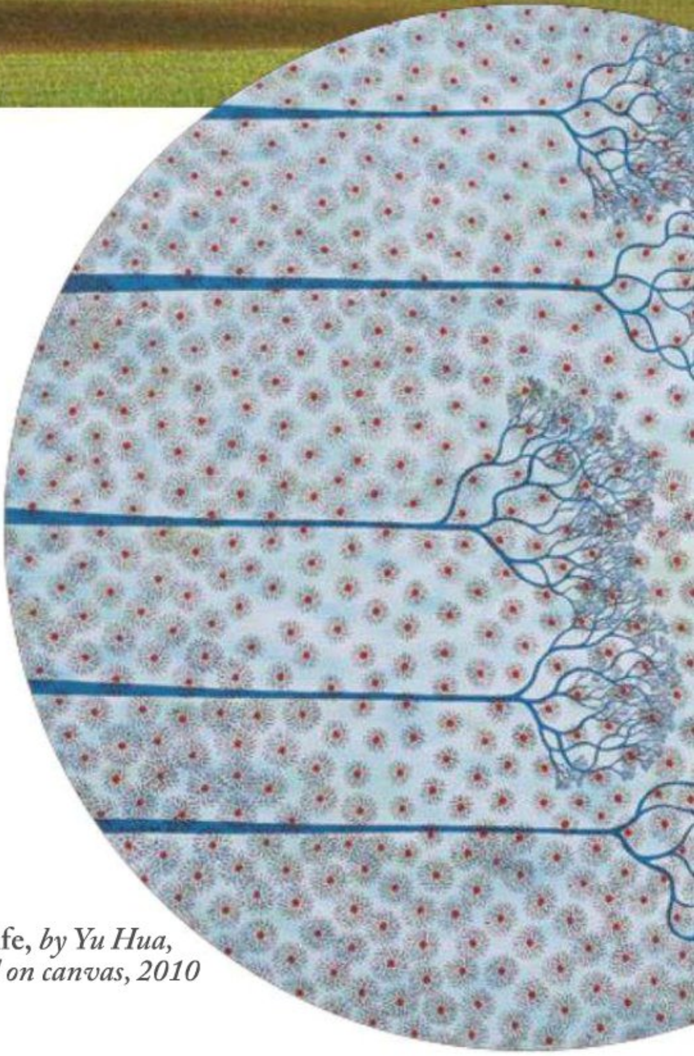


Big Banyan, *by Ye Ziqi, 127x213.14cm, oil on canvas, 2009-2010*

The themes also evidence the attitudes of modern artists from both sides of the Taiwan Straits, who continue their unremitting efforts to escape restraints of Western art and establish firm roots in their native traditions while amassing a deeper understanding and concern for the day-to-day lives and the cultural particularity of different language backgrounds.

In exhibits by artists from China's mainland, the majority focus on presentational expressions. A piece by Yin Xiuzhen, for example, leads the audience to a "brain" woven with clothes, which depicts a world fusing memory and experience. One by Yang Fudong depicts a fashion magazine editor's magic ideas as full of imagination, nostalgia, and tales written in water.

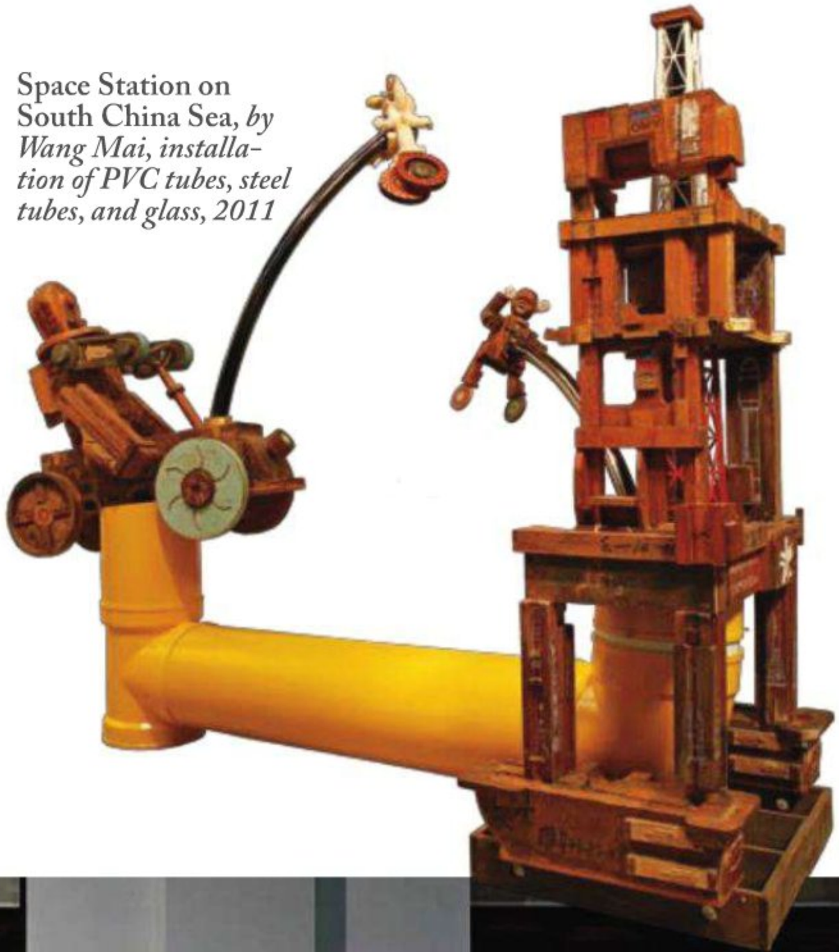
In addition, Chinese mainland artists also like to critique reality. Mu Chen, for instance, presents production and consumption in the process of globalization with logos of world-famous brands, such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Sony, made by different-colored earth gathered from Beijing and the provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Jiangxi, and Anhui. Another example is Wang Mai, who leads viewers to his magic reality constructed with a per-



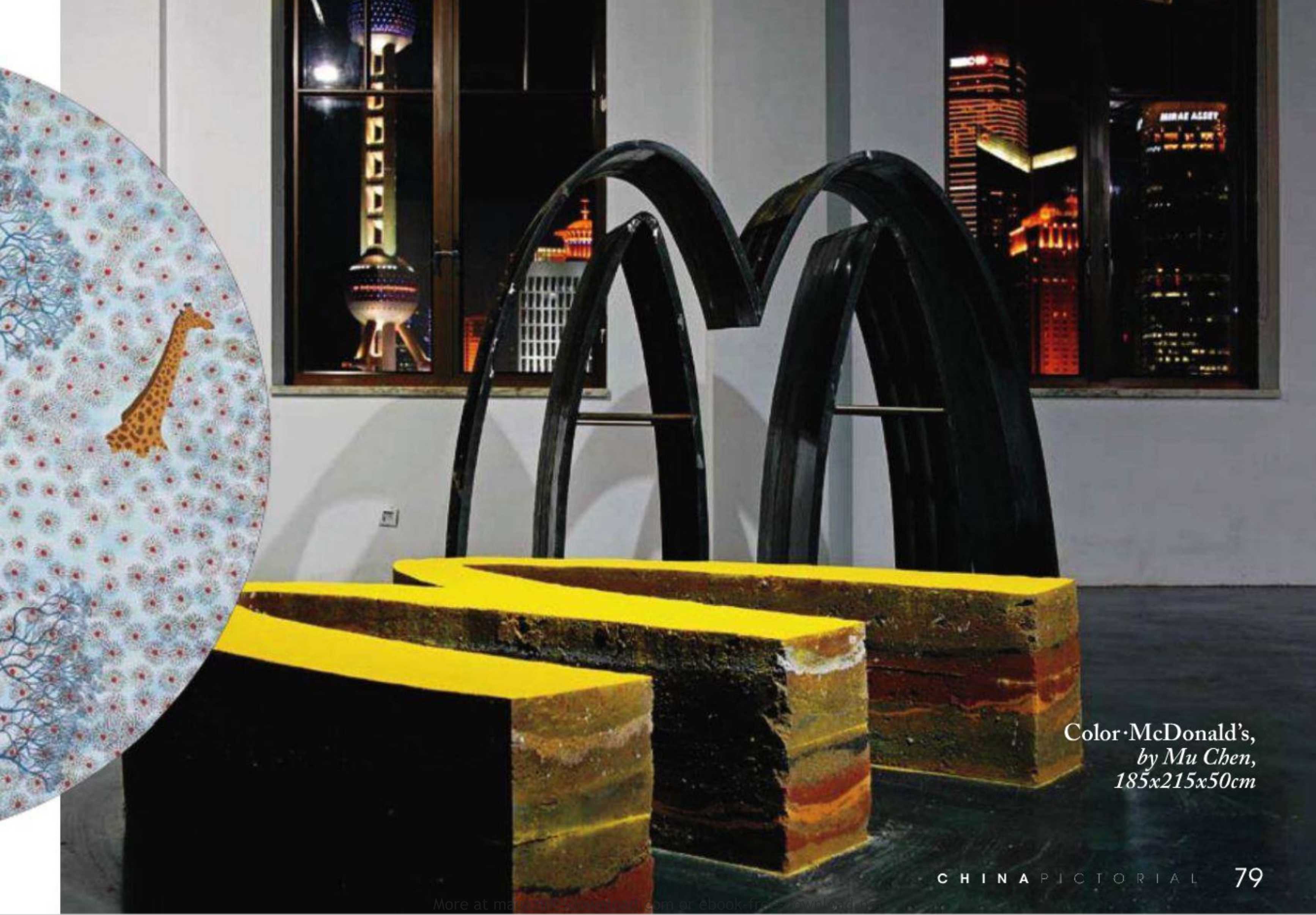
Dynamic Life, *by Yu Hua, 80x80cm, oil on canvas, 2010* ceptual language. Bu Bing, an architect, erected a wind-wing-move installation on a platform, where people can enjoy his *House in the Clouds* while envisioning the beautiful scenery in the distance.

Artists from Taiwan display their talent in a bolder way through new materials and media. Many of their works are more like video imprints. Tsong Pu, for example, uses stamps instead of brushes in his painting, creating a piece of art with an extension of grids. Yeh Tzu-chi develops an atmosphere of mystery in his work, tranquil and secluded, depicting natural subjects with fine, smooth, and true-life tunes. A work by Yao Jui Zhong appears like a dialogue between ancient and modern Chinese artists by recreating a Ming-Dynasty (1368-1644) masterpiece landscape by Wu Bin. Another noteworthy exhibit was created by Shen Chao-Liang, who delivers a video depiction of beauty and profound culture on an oil-pressured mobile stage – an integration of photography, video production, and installation art.

These works represent trends of newer artistic creation along both sides of the Taiwan Straits, especially in the methodologies and usage of new materials, such as technology, media, and video. The exhibition will visit Taiwan in June.



Space Station on South China Sea, *by Wang Mai, installation of PVC tubes, steel tubes, and glass, 2011*



Color·McDonald's, *by Mu Chen, 185x215x50cm*

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Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing Offers an Audio

Heralding the start of the spring season, Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing is pleased to invite guests to relax to the sounds of Tabitha King, who is the new resident entertainer at Centro. A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Tabitha's passion lies in entertaining and performing. Possessing a wide repertoire from jazz to pop, Tabitha's soothing, sultry sound has mesmerised audiences around the world.

From 17 March 2011, Tabitha will perform daily, except Sundays, from 8p.m. onwards.

For more information or reservations, please contact Centro at (86 10) 8565 2398.

Taste Spring-Fest at Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing

Guests in a leisurely and carefree mood are invited to try The Horizon Chinese Restaurant. With an exclusive menu featuring dishes made with select and seasonal fresh spring tea leaves, guests can complete their experience with a refreshing pot of sweet smelling spring tea. The chef highly recommends signature dishes such as Green Tea Pudding or Deep-fried Roast Suckling Pig with Shrimp in Tieh-Kuan-Yin Tea.

The Spring Tea promotion is available from March to June 2011 for lunch and dinner.
For more information or reservations, please contact Horizon Chinese Restaurant at (86 10) 8565 2188.

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Mrs. Nancy Gu Appointed as Director of Sales & Marketing for Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun

Mrs. Nancy Gu has been appointed as Director of Sales & Marketing of the Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun. She has 18 years of experience of sales, marketing & F&B management at hotels. Prior to that, Nancy was Director of Events of InterContinental Financial Street Hotel Beijing.
Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun is located in the heart of bustling Zhongguancun, often referred to as China's Silicon Valley. More than an outstanding location, the hotel offers stylish guest rooms, professional services and extensive meeting and banquet facilities, all within a relaxing ambiance.

Oscar Kiwi Publicity Campaign in Beijing

Recently, France's Oscar brand of kiwi fruit held a publicity campaign in Beijing. As a high-end French fruit, Oscar kiwi is already well known throughout Europe. Company chairman François Lafitte and general manager Jean-Baptiste Pinel attended the meeting to introduce both their kiwi and operational strategy to China. The fruit was first exported to China in 2008.

Room Seasonal Promotion Sofitel Forebase Chongqing

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A Wedding Open House Day is held at InterContinental Beijing Financial Street on Sunday, March 6. Over 100 guests are expected at the Xian Ballroom - the primary wedding venue of the hotel, to enjoy a specially planned forum that includes classes in The Etiquette of Choosing Proper Wedding Gowns, Bridal Spa Treatments, and Honeymoon Travel Options, all organized by the hotel's experienced staff.
"At the InterContinental Beijing Financial Street, we not only try to provide a well designed venue for beautiful ceremonies, but we assist in creating a complete wedding experience for our engaged couples. We call it our World of Weddings," said Mr. Bradford Rice, the hotel's General Manager.

For more information, please contact the InterContinental Beijing Financial Street at (86 10) 58525888 or browse on the website: www.intercontinental.com/icbeijing
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The view of Xianshui Rock

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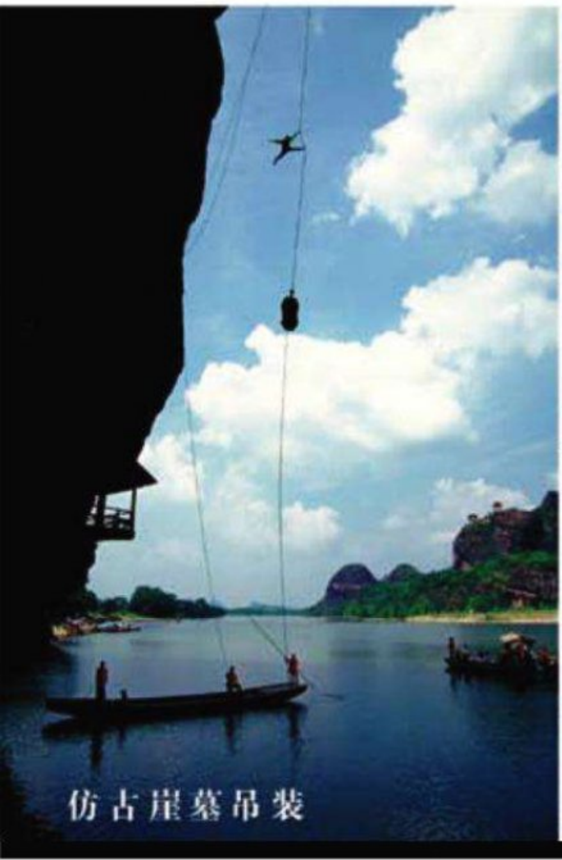
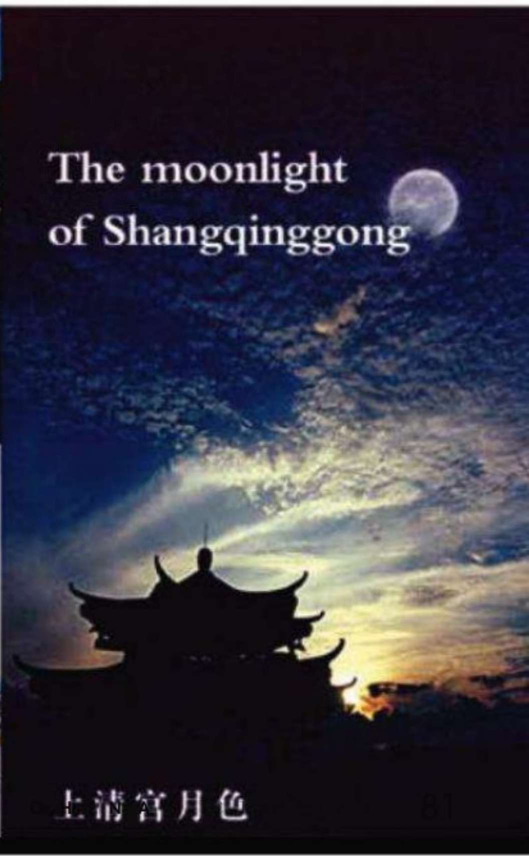


仿古崖墓吊装

Taoist Temple 山顶道观

The new tourist centre

新游客中心



The moonlight of Shangqinggong

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